

TWO NEO-CONFUCIAN PERSPECTIVES
ON THE WAY
YI YI'S AND LI ZHI'S COMMENTARIES ON THE *LAOZI*

KIM, HAK ZE
(*B.A., KOREA UNIVERSITY*)
(*M.A., ACADEMY OF KOREAN STUDIES*)

A THESIS SUBMITTED
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is a result of my recent exploration in East Asian thought. For me East Asian thought is a spiritual learning for self and society. It relates equally to religions, literature, politics, and history, thereby obscuring the boundaries between them and bewildering students. Nevertheless, students find that such a characteristic of East Asian thought can turn into richness in learning. Since East Asian thinkers expressed their thought through occasional talks, letters, and poems more than explanatory philosophical works, discerning their meaning can be an exhaustive undertaking. Nevertheless, the whole process of learning in East Asian thought has been a pleasure for me.

My immediate academic indebtedness in this study should be attributed to Alan K.L. Chan (NUS) and Choi Jin-Duk 최진덕 (AKS). Prof. Chan, my current supervisor, has led me here by his excellent mentorship and scholarship on Chinese tradition. He has been the strongest supporter of my research in NUS. Without his generous yet careful guidance, I could not have completed my study in NUS. Prof. Choi Jin-Duk, a traditional Korean teacher and my former supervisor, has scolded and encouraged me by his fine scholarship and passion since I met him in the Academy of Korean Studies in 1997. As a representative Korean researcher in the field of Joseon and Song-Ming thought, Prof. Choi has taught and stimulated me enormously.

In addition, I must confess that I owed Dr. Yu Dong-Hwan 유동환 a lot; he provided a great amount of materials about Li Zhi. I remember learning a great deal from him in Korea University and holding discussions with other like-minded colleagues in Dongyang cheolhak ban 동양철학반; without Dr. Yu, my study in East Asian philosophy would not have even started.

And I want to pay respect to my grandparent teacher – Kim Hyeong-Hyo 김형효. For me Prof. Kim has always been a big mountain to overcome as well as the strongest supporter to rely on in my inner battles. In addition, I want to express my gratitude for scholars whom I was so much indebted to but haven't even met – Mizoguchi Yūzō, W.T. de Bary, Xu Jianping, Julia Ching, et al.

My sincere thanks also go to my colleagues in NUS and Korea: Head of department, Prof. Tan Sor-Hoon; Dr. Loy Hui-Chieh; Prof. Lo Yuet-Keung from Chinese Studies for sharing their insight into Chinese philosophy; Ven. Pema for his spiritual support; Zamirul Islam for his warm friendship (a *Bondu!*); Jinyi Wang and her husband, Lao Pang for their support in Beijing; Edward Dass for his cheerful greeting every time (*Hyeongnim!*); Ola, Raphael, and Bendick; the General office staff; Prof. Jang Seung-Koo at Semyung University, Dr. Kim Baek-Hee, Dr. Yi Chang-Yil, et al. in Academy of Korean Studies; all the staff and curators of Museum of Humanities in Seoul, and YOU, whom I haven't mentioned here.

Besides, I won't forget that Dr. Benjamin Afful from English Department suffered from the painstaking proofreading and correction of my ineffective writing and that NUS offered generous support to me, thereby enabling me to study both in Singapore and abroad. In addition, I would like to thank the staff of the Central and Chinese library of NUS, the Library of Academy of Korean Studies (*Jangseo gak*), the Ancient Archives of Peking University (*Guji bu*), and the Central library of Seoul National University – they facilitated my research in their places in many respects.

Last but not least, I offer my utmost thanks to my parents and family: my father, Kim Jun-Shik 김준식 and my mother, Kwon Yoon-Seon 권윤선 for all kinds of imaginable and unimaginable reasons; elder brother, Kim Hak-Jun 김학준 and his wife, Kwon Su-Yeon 권수연; my sister, Kim Ju-Yeong 김주영 and her husband, Kang Kun-Yil 강균일 as well as my lovely nephew, Kang Shin-Beom 강신범 – the innermost source of my sincerity and inspiration.

*This dissertation is dedicated to
Kim Jun-Shik, Kwon Yoon-Seon, and Kang Shin-Beom
without whom my past, present, and future cannot be even imagined.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	iii
Summary	vi
List of Tables	viii
I. Introduction	1
1. <i>Laozi jie and Sun-Eon: Confucian or Daoist text?</i>	1
1-1) <i>Objects of Study</i>	1
1-2) <i>Structure of Thesis</i>	5
2. <i>Neo-Confucian attitudes toward the Laozi</i>	8
2-1) <i>The Neo-Confucian reception of the Laozi since the Song dynsty</i>	8
2-2) <i>Neo-Confucians' trouble with the equivocal Dao and li</i>	26
II. Yulgok: Self-attainment as the Pivot for learning	32
1. <i>Yulgok: A Buddhist in Confucian Guise?</i>	32
2. <i>Yulgok's attitude toward learning:</i> <i>Outreach and Openness from within</i>	43
3. <i>Yulgok's metaphysics of Li and Qi:</i> <i>Clarity and Ambiguity</i>	54
3-1) <i>Zhu Xi on li and qi</i>	55
3-2) <i>Yulgok's Self-attainment of liyi-fenshu and the problem of Buddhism</i>	59
3-3) <i>Litong-kiguk/litong-qiju and the traces of Daoist metaphysics</i>	65
3-4) <i>Clarity and ambiguity of Yulgok on li and qi, and later unfolding</i>	69
4. <i>Re-editing the Laozi and the Structure</i>	75
4-1) <i>The Laozi as a Confucian text?</i>	76
4-2) <i>The structure of the Sun-Eon, and the Great Learning</i>	81
4-3) <i>Han syncretism, Song synthesis, and the Laozi received by Yulgok</i>	88
III. Yulgok on the Laozi:	

<i>Principle, Self-cultivation, and Confucian Sages</i>	98
1. <i>The Way and Principle</i>	98
1-1) <i>Dao, taiji, and li</i>	98
1-2) <i>Wu / You, Li / Qi, and Xin</i>	109
A. <i>Non-being, li/qi, and spontaneity</i>	110
B. <i>Non-being and the Heart-mind</i>	115
C. <i>Non-being and substance/function</i>	120
2. <i>The concept of “de” and Human nature</i>	124
2-1) <i>De as xing</i>	124
2-2) <i>De (xing) as originated from Dao (li)</i>	131
A. <i>Dao (li) as ziran and wuwei: good or neither good nor evil?</i>	131
B. <i>De (xing) and the heart-mind revisited</i>	137
3. <i>Self-cultivation and the ideal of Confucian Sage</i>	148
3-1) <i>Framework of Self-cultivation – Emptying or/and filling the heart-mind</i>	148
3-2) <i>Propriety and Reverence for no action and spontaneity of xing</i>	153
3-3) <i>Self-cultivation, Governing the people, and Confucian Sage</i>	160
IV. Li Zhi: Disenchantment and Awakening	165
1. <i>Li Zhi’s suicide</i>	165
2. <i>Li Zhi on the Three Teachings – The problem of Syncretism</i>	175
2-1) <i>Buddhism and Awakening to the fundamentals in learning</i>	175
2-2) <i>Li Zi’s Confucianism as a Non-determinable Radicalism</i>	184
2-3) <i>Childlike mind and True Emptiness:</i>	
<i>The culmination of Li’s Syncretism and Non-determinable Radicalism</i>	191
A. <i>Childlike mind and Confucianism</i>	195
B. <i>Buddhist and Daoist influences on the Childlike mind</i>	196
C. <i>Import of the Childlike mind</i>	199
D. <i>Childlike mind and True Emptiness</i>	201
3. <i>Li Zhi on Daoism</i>	205
3-1) <i>Daoism as the intersection of Buddhism and Confucianism</i>	205
3-2) <i>The Laozi jie and related matters</i>	213

V. Li Zhi on the <i>Laozi</i>:	
<i>True Emptiness, Heart-Mind, and Oneness of All Myriad Things</i>	216
1. <i>The Way and True Emptiness</i>	216
1-1) <i>Being and Non-Being: Dao as non-Dao?</i>	216
A. <i>The Constant Dao vs. the Effable Dao</i>	216
B. <i>Dao as both Being and Non-Being</i>	221
C. <i>Dao as non-Dao</i>	225
1-2) <i>Dao as True Emptiness beyond being and non-being</i>	227
1-3) <i>Dao as Criterion as Non-Criterion: Ziran and Wuwei</i>	234
2. <i>Dao, Virtue (de), and the Heart-mind</i>	242
2-1) <i>Virtue (de): Nature or Effect?</i>	242
A. <i>Virtue as Nature</i>	243
B. <i>Virtue as Effect and Function of Heart-mind</i>	244
2-2) <i>Heart-mind as the ultimate reality</i>	249
A. <i>Vacuity, Non-being, and the Heart-mind</i>	249
B. <i>Securing/Embracing oneness and the Heart-mind</i>	255
3. <i>Heart-mind, Unity of All things, and Ideal Governance</i>	261
3-1) <i>Cultivation of the Heart-mind and the Political Ideal</i>	261
3-2) <i>Political Import of Oneness: Homogeneity and Universality?</i>	267
VI. Conclusion	272
Selected Bibliography	276
Appendices	291
Appendix I Two different views on the motive of Yulgok's stay in the Keumkang Mount	291
Appendix II Emperor Gao on the Three Teachings (<i>Gao Huangdi Sanjiao lun</i> 高皇帝三教論)	293

SUMMARY

The *Laozi* is one of the most influential classics in Chinese history and has given rise to a rich commentarial tradition. Even Neo-Confucians, who ostensibly viewed Daoism with suspicion, were attracted to the *Laozi*. This thesis explores two Ming-Joseon Neo-Confucians' understanding of the *Laozi* – Li Zhi (1527-1602, styled Zhuowu) of Ming China and Yi Yi (1536-1584, styled Yulgok) of Joseon Korea.

Yulgok's *Sun-Eon* (Purified words of Laozi) represents a “Cheng-Zhu” view on the *Laozi*, while Li Zhi's *Laozi jie* (Interpretation of the *Laozi*) exemplifies a “Yangming” understanding of the *Laozi* in their times. Their perspectives on the *Laozi* were influenced by their cultural and philosophical backgrounds. Although this thesis focuses on their understanding of the *Laozi*, the *Laozi jie* and the *Sun-Eon* are also important sources for the study of Neo-Confucianism as a whole. Both commentaries show that Neo-Confucianism can be effectively appropriated for interpretation of the *Laozi* and that for Yulgok and Li Zhi the *Laozi* provides insight into key philosophical questions on the universal principle and its implication on self and society.

Yulgok and Li Zhi both understand the philosophy of Laozi as centering on self-cultivation (*xiuji*) and governing the people (*zhiren*), and they compare *Dao* (the Way), *de* (virtue), *wuwei* (no-action), and *ziran* (spontaneity and naturalness) with Neo-Confucian *li* (principle), *qi* (material forces), *xing* (nature), and *xin* (the heart-mind), finding significant commonality between the concepts of the *Laozi* and of Neo-Confucianism. However, Yulgok and Li Zhi show differences in their concrete understanding of the *Laozi* due to their different philosophical backgrounds; Yulgok uses the Cheng-Zhu *li-qi* metaphysics, interpreting *Dao* and *de* as *li* and *xing*, while Li Zhi applies Chan (Zen) Buddhist and Yangming thought to his interpretation of the *Laozi*, understanding most concepts and ideas in terms of the heart-mind.

In sum, Yulgok discerned in the *Laozi* the universal “principle” that penetrates both nature and human beings, while Li Zhi found in the *Laozi* the way of the “heart-mind” that frees us from attachment to fixed principles (*dingli*). Their appropriation of Neo-Confucian philosophy for reading of the *Laozi* is possible by virtue of the hermeneutical openness of the *Laozi*, and, in so doing it helps renew and develop key issues in the philosophy of Laozi.

In conclusion, I argue that Yulgok and Li Zhi’s commentaries are not mere imposition of their thought on the *Laozi* but a successful philosophical synthesis; Yulgok and Li Zhi tried to re-discover the truth of the *Laozi* in their own philosophical contexts, thereby bequeathing to posterity two different yet equally insightful Neo-Confucian perspectives on the *Laozi*.

List of Tables

Table 1 Structure of the <i>Sun-Eon</i>	82
Table 2 Structure of the <i>Seonghak jipyo</i>	83
Table 3 Structure of the <i>Jinsi lu</i>	84
Table 4 Comparison of the structures of the three works	87

I. Introduction

1. *Laozi jie* and *Sun-Eon*: Confucian or Daoist texts?

1-1) *Objects of Study*

This thesis explores two Neo-Confucian figures, Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602, styled Zhuowu 卓吾) of Ming 明 China and Yi Yi 李珥 (1536-1584, styled Yulgok 栗谷) of Joseon 朝鮮 Korea. Particularly, their understanding of the *Laozi*, Li Zhi's *Laozi jie* 老子解 (Interpretation of the *Laozi*) and Yulgok's *Sun-Eon* 醇言 (Purified words of *Laozi*),¹ will be studied. Both works *prima facie* may look ambiguous as to whether they are Confucian or Daoist texts given that they are written by two well-known Neo-Confucians. Hence, it needs to be explicated at the outset why and how these two Neo-Confucians' works on the *Laozi* will be dealt with in this study.

While numerous and significant studies about these two thinkers have been written,² there is a dearth of studies that focus on their reading of the *Laozi* although both works are undoubtedly important components of their philosophical enterprise. The reason for this may be because from the perspective of Neo-Confucian studies, their other major works are thought to be more important in understanding their general philosophical contributions. Also,

¹ For proper names and philosophical concepts in Korean sources, Korean pronunciations will be used. However, in the case of common philosophical or cultural concepts, both Chinese and Korean pronunciations will be provided – for instance, *cheon/tian* 天, heaven.

² For modern publications about Li Zhi, refer to “Appendix II. Bibliography of Modern Publications on Li Chih (1901-1979),” in Hok-lam Chan trans. and edit, *Li Chih 1527-1602 in Contemporary Chinese Historiography – New light on his life and works* (White Plains, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1980); “Appendix III. Bibliography for publications about Li Zhi in recent 100 years,” in Zhang Jianye 張建業 ed., *Li Zhi xueshu guoji taolun lunwen ji* 李贄學術國際討論論文集 (Beijing: Shoudu Shifandaxue, 1994); Yu Dong-Hwan 劉東桓, *Yiji-ui cheoliyinyoklon yeonku* 李贄의 天理人欲論 研究 (Korea University PhD dissertation, 2000), pp. 1-30. For publications after 1980 and a brief introduction about chronological and regional changes in the trend of Li Zhi studies, refer to Yu Dong-Hwan's work.

For modern publication about Yulgok, refer to “Appendix. List of publications about Yulgok,” in Hwang Ui-Dong ed., *Yulgok Yi Yi* 율곡 이이 (Seoul: Yemunseowon, 2002).

on the side of Daoist studies, the Daoism of the Pre-Qin (*xian Qin* 先秦), Wei-Jin 魏晉, and Tang 唐 dynasties has been considered more authentic and important, and therefore Neo-Confucian works on Daoism have not attracted much attention. Indeed it is quite recently that scholars have begun to pay attention to the works of Neo-Confucians on Daoism.³

For these reasons, Li Zhi and Yulgok's works on the *Laozi* have not been extensively studied by students of both Confucianism and Daoism. On the one hand, Li Zhi's interest in Daoism has been discussed usually in the context of the development of his scholarly interest and pluralistic religious outlook. His commentary on the *Laozi*, *Laozi jie*, though not totally forgotten, has not been closely examined, although it was regarded as an exemplary works on the *Laozi* in his time, as will be shown presently below. A dedicated study seems overdue.

Yulgok's *Sun-Eon* has been largely ignored. In fact, it was found only recently in the Inner Royal Library of the Joseon dynasty (*Kyujanggak* 奎章閣) in 1974.⁴ Even after it was

³ Among these are Xiong Tieji 熊鉄基, et al., *Zhongguo laoxue shi* 中國老學史 (Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1995); Liu Gusheng 劉固盛, *Songyuan laoxue shi* 宋元老學研究 (Bashu shushe, 2001); Kong Linghong 孔令宏, *Zhuxi zhexue yu daoia, daojiao* 朱熹哲學與道家、道教 (Hebei daxue chubanshe, 2001); Yin Zhihua 尹志華, *Beisong laozhi zhu yanjiu* 北宋老子注研究 (Bashu shushe, 2004); the *Daojia yu Zhongguozhexue* 道家與中國哲學 series (Beijing: Renmin daxue chubanshe), etc. These works begin to shed new light on Neo-Confucian works on Daoism. Nonetheless, these works focus more on the general trend of each period of Daoist studies. Individual work on Daoism still remains to be studied.

Keeping pace with this recent trend in China, the study of Korean Neo-Confucians' works on Daoism has also only recently started. There were earlier studies by Kim Kil-Hwan 김길환, Song Hang-Ryong 송향룡, and Kim Nak-Pil 김낙필, but they were introductory in nature. The more important recent studies are Jo Min-Hwan 조민환, *Yuhakjaduilyi bon nojang cheolhak* 儒學者들이 본 老莊哲學 (Seoul: Yemunseowon, 1996); Bak Won-Jae 박원재, Joseon Yuhak-ui doga yihae 조선유학의 도가 이해, in Hankuk sasang yeonkuso 韓國思想 研究所 ed., *Hankuk-ui cheolhak sasang* 韓國의 哲學 思想 – Jaryo-wa haeseol 資料와 解説, (Seoul: Yemunseowon, 2001), pp. 355-378; Kim Hak-Mok 김학목 trans., *Yulgok yiyi-ui noja – Suneon, jeongtong jujahakja-ui noja yilki* 율곡 이이의 노자 – 醇言, 정통 주자학의 노자 읽기 (Seoul: Yemunseowon, 2001).

⁴ Lyu Chil-No 柳七魯 is credited with this discovery. The extant *Sun-Eon* is a handwritten copy, but it is not the original manuscript by Yulgok. It was copied from a printed edition of the *Sun-Eon* published by Hong Gye-Hi 洪啓禧 (1703-1771) in 1750. Hong reported that he obtained a handwritten copy from a descendant of Kim Jip 金集 (1574-1656), who was the

found, there was little research on it, because for most scholars Yulgok was generally understood to be an orthodox Neo-Confucian with little sympathy for Daoism and Buddhism. Given that Neo-Confucianism dominated the intellectual scene of the Joseon dynasty, Yulgok's *Purified words of Laozi* was often deemed a puzzling and doubtful work.⁵

In this thesis, I argue that Yulgok's *Sun-Eon* represents a "Cheng-Zhu" interpretation of the *Laozi*, whereas Li Zhi's *Laozi jie* exemplifies the interpretation of the "Yangming" tradition at the time. Both authors should be considered as having contributed significantly to the history of interpretation of the *Laozi* (*Laoxue shi* 老學史). Although Li Zhi and Yulgok were Confucian scholars, they were serious students of the *Laozi*. As Alan Chan has pointed out,⁶ the *Laozi* as a classic has formed a field in which intellectuals of different backgrounds and persuasions compete with their interpretations. The history of interpretation of the *Laozi*

son of Kim Jang-Seng 金長生 (1548-1631), a disciple and son-in-law of Yulgok. The epilogue of Hong Gye-Hi (*balmun* 跋文) relates, "When I was on inspection tour in the Hoseo 湖西 (Chungcheng 忠清) province, I passed by Yeonsan and by chance got this book from a descendant of Kim Jip who copied the book by handwriting. I was afraid that it might have been lost. And so I printed small number of copies of it" (啓禧 按湖西, 巡過連山 (1749), 偶得此編, 於慎齋金先生後孫乃金先生手筆也. 或恐泯沒以活字印若干本). *Sun-Eon* 醇言 (Seoul: Ryeongang chulpansa, 1984), photocopied edition, p. 62.

⁵ This is the reason why most studies on the *Sun-Eon* did not go further than a simple introduction and summary of the *Sun-Eon* or mentioning the similarity in thought between the *Sun-Eon* and Yulgok's major works (mainly his *Gist of the Sagely learning*, or *Seonghak jipyo* 聖學輯要). Most scholars who accept the authenticity of the *Sun-Eon* seem to believe that the *Sun-Eon* was written by Yulgok possibly after *Seonghak jipyo*. However, the similarity between the two works does not necessarily confirm the time of writing because those similar sentences are typical of the orthodox Neo-Confucianism by Zhu Xi, and therefore, those sentences cannot be regarded as quotes from the *Songhak jipyo*. Since the *Sun-Eon* was not included in the *Collection of Yulgok's works*, or *Yulgok Jeonseo* 栗谷全書 (1611), some suspicion might be attached to the authorship of the *Sun-Eon*. However, the epilogue of Hong Gye-Hi reports Yulgok's closest friend, Song Yik-Pil's 宋翼弼 (1534-1599) critical comment on the *Sun-Eon*. Moreover, Seo Myeong-Eung 徐命膺 (1716-1787), who was a famous philologist and philosopher and worked in the Royal library of the Joseon dynasty, clearly accepted that the *Sun-Eon* was no doubt written by Yulgok, and mentioned this fact in his commentary on the *Laozi*, or the *Dodeok ji'gwi* 道德指歸. Since little would be gained for the Yulgok School by ascribing a *Laozi* commentary to Yulgok, I see little reason in doubting Hong Gye-Hi's report and the authenticity of the *Sun-Eon*.

⁶ Alan K.L. Chan, *Two visions of the Way – A Study of the Wang Pi and Ho-shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao-Tzu* (New York: SUNY, 1991), pp. ix-x.

involved not only Daoists but also Confucians and Buddhists. No one can assert that only Daoists have exhausted and understood the true meaning of the text. It also cannot be said that Confucians ignored or were ignorant of Daoist and Buddhist teachings, and *vice versa*. In engaging the other schools, they actively contributed toward the development of their teachings. Interestingly, their contributions were sometimes ironical results of hostile criticism or attempted theoretical subjugation. Thus, important commentators of the *Laozi* hailed from various intellectual backgrounds; they may provide Confucian-Daoist or Buddho-Daoist readings or they may view the text from the perspective of a syncretism of the three. But thanks to this variety, the *Laozi* gains in hermeneutical richness.

In short, Li Zhi and Yulgok should be positioned in a chapter of the *Laoxue shi* as students of Daoism although they were Confucians as well. Wang Fuzhi's 王夫之 (1619-1692, styled Chunshan 船山) comment on the *Laoxue shi* is relevant here and confirms the circulation of Li Zhi's *Laozi jie* in China at that time:

There have been [many] commentators of the *Laozi* since long time before; each age (generation) has various schools, with scholars transmitting different viewpoints. In the case of Wang Fuzi [i.e., Wang Bi, 226-249] and He Pingshu [i.e., He Yan, 190-249], they incorporated the *Laozi* into the teachings of the *Book of Changes*; Kumarajiva [343-413] and Emperor Wu of the Liang went further to adopt the Buddhist theory of “phenomenon/noumenon” (*shi/li*) and “dependant co-origination” (*yinguo*). Accordingly, their commentaries were inconsistent and distorted, and their delusion has been long. When it comes to Lu Xisheng [?-895], Su Ziyong [i.e., Su Zhe 蘇轍, 1039-1112], Dong Sijing [?-?, Southern Song dynasty], and recently, Jiao Hong [1540-1620, styled Ruohou 弱侯] and Li Zhi, they cited Chan/Zen 禪 Buddhism, and squared the *Laozi* with Chan...

昔之注老子者，代有殊宗，家傳異說，逮王輔嗣，何平叔合之於乾坤易簡，鳩摩羅什，梁武帝濫之於事理因果，則支補牽會，其誣久矣；迄陸希聲，蘇子由，董思靖及近代焦竑，李贄之流，益引禪宗，互為綴合...⁷

In Joseon Korea, the currency of the *Sun-Eon* is confirmed by the renowned Confucian scholar and commentator of the *Laozi*, Seo Myong-Eung 徐命膺 (1716-1787):

⁷ *Laoziyan* 老子衍, *Chunshan quanshu* 船山全書, *juan* 13, (Changsha: Yuelushushe, 1993), p. 15.

I saw that predecessors who were called “pure Confucians” such as Sima Guang 司馬光 [1019-1086] of the Song, Wu Cheng 吳澄 [1249-1333] of the Yuan, and our country’s Yulgok all commented on and interpreted the *Laozi*.
余見前輩號稱醇儒者如宋涑水司馬氏, 元之臨川吳氏, 我東之栗谷李氏皆註解老子.⁸

To paraphrase the 13th century’s commentator, Du Daojian 杜道堅,⁹ we will say that there was a “Ming-Joseon *Laozi*,” shaped by the “valued norms” at the time. In order to understand the “Ming-Joseon *Laozi*” of Li Zhi and Yulgok, their general cultural and philosophical backgrounds need to be consulted.¹⁰ As will be shown in this thesis, Li Zhi’s perspective originated from his radical Yangming philosophy, while Yulgok’s can be said to have originated from the orthodox Cheng-Zhu philosophy.

1-2) *Structure of Thesis*

The next section of Chapter I introduces various Neo-Confucian attitudes toward the *Laozi*, thereby establishing the immediate background to Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s approaches to Daoist philosophy, and in the latter part of the section, we will examine how their attitudes are different from those of other Neo-Confucians. In the last section of Chapter I, it is argued that the concept of *Dao* or principle (*li* 理), the impersonal and universal pattern of the universe, is

⁸ (Joseon) Seo Myong-Eung, *Dodeok ji’gwi* 道德指歸 (photocopied), Preface. Yulgok’s *Sun-Eon* was the first commentary on the *Laozi* ever in Korea, and became a catalyst of descendant Neo-Confucians’ study of the *Laozi*, as seen in the above.

⁹ Alan K.L. Chan, *ibid.*, p. 4:

“The coming of the Way to the world takes on different forms each time. Commentators have largely followed **the valued norms of their age** and sought wholeheartedly to learn from (Tao). Thus what the Han commentaries have is a “**Han Lao-tzu** (Laozi)”; Chin commentaries, a “**Chin** (Qin) **Lao-tze**”; T’ang and Sung commentaries, “**Tang Lao-tzu**” and “**Sung** (Song) **Lao-tzu**.” (*Xuanjing yuanzhi fahui* 玄經原旨發揮) (My emphasis)

¹⁰ It would be helpful for understanding of the *Laozi jie* and the *Sun-Eon* to consult their general philosophical standpoints. However, it should be without being susceptible to a charge of over-simplification and reductionism in the process. Their general philosophy will be examined just to such a degree that it helps us understand their viewpoints on the *Laozi*, and it is not my intention to provide an account of their overall philosophical characteristics by studying the *Laozi jie* and the *Sun-Eon* or to judge the accuracy of their understanding of the *Laozi*. Rather, I will focus more on their philosophical perspectives manifested in the readings of the *Laozi*.

common to both Daoism and Neo-Confucianism. This was the reason why Neo-Confucians could not simply deny the value of Laozi's philosophy. Nevertheless, Neo-Confucians as strong moralists are troubled by the concept of *Dao* in the *Laozi* because they regard Laozi's *Dao* as focusing on the amoral patterns of the world. For Neo-Confucians, *Dao* or *li* is always the supreme moral good, which causes "the innate goodness of [human] nature" (*xingshan* 性善) as well. Although Laozi's *Dao* highlights its amorality, it touches on morality too, and this ambiguity or paradox of *Dao* is also common to the Neo-Confucian concept of *li*, as will be discussed in the thesis. This paradoxical concept of *Dao* underlies Yulgok's and Li Zhi's understanding of the *Laozi*.

Chapter II, "Yulgok: *Self-attainment as the Pivot for Learning*" and Chapter IV, "Li Zhi: *Disenchantment and Awakening*" introduce the life and thought of Yulgok and Li Zhi. Though these chapters do not aim to provide an exhaustive study of their life and thought in general, they help us understand the approach of Yulgok and Li Zhi to Daoism. Both chapters suggest that their approach to Daoism had a deep connection with Buddhism. Thus, this study cannot but relate to the topic of *Sanjiao heyi* 三教合一 (Unity of the three teachings or Syncretism of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism). However, this study does not focus on *Sanjiao heyi* as a discrete religious movement; instead, it deals with *Sanjiao heyi* as a cultural background to the *Laozi* learning of Yulgok and Li Zhi. Both Yulgok's and Li Zhi's attitudes toward the three teachings verged on syncretism, or *Sanjiao heyi*. Nevertheless, they were not conscious activists who promoted *Sanjiao heyi*.¹¹ Rather, Yulgok and Li Zhi can be described

¹¹ There were many scholars who strongly supported the thesis of *Sanjiao heyi*; for example, Mou Rong 牟融 in the Later Han, Zhang Rong 張融 in the southern Qi, Wang Tong 王通 in the Sui, Liu Mi 劉謐 in the Yuan, and Lin Zhaoen 林兆恩 (1517-1598) of the Ming. Especially Liu Mi and Lin Zhaoen need to be mentioned; Liu Mi's *Sanjiao pingxin lun* 三教平心論 was contained in the *Sanjiao pin* 三教品 edited and prefaced by Li Zhi, and Lin Zhaoen was a contemporary of Li Zhi. However, Li Zhi can hardly be regarded as having treated *Sanjiao heyi* as his prime agenda. This becomes obvious when Li Zhi is compared

“Dao-ist fundamentalists,” due to their belief in one universal *Dao*. Insofar as their primary concern was to realize the genuine *Dao*, the important issue for them was not membership in a particular school but to practice *Dao* properly. Their quest for *Dao* was not out of scholastic interest but moral and practical concern; they wanted to cultivate their heart-mind (*xin* 心) and nature (*xing* 性) and bring harmonious government to their societies (*zhiren* 治人) through understanding *Dao*, the origin of the heart-mind and nature. In this sense, Buddhism and Daoism could be good complementary sources for Yulgok and Li Zhi to turn to for their practical concern. Neo-Confucianism grew out of interactions among the three teachings; it is not surprising for even committed Neo-Confucians to find commonality among the three teachings. In both chapters, one can notice that Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s personal experience regarding death and life aroused their interest in Buddhism and Daoism. Starting from their experience regarding death and life, such concepts as *Dao*, principle (*li* 理), material force (*qi* 氣), the heart-mind (*xin* 心), and nature (*xing* 性) are re-appropriated from a non-partisan viewpoint. This course of reflection can be characterized with the concept of “self-attainment or getting it from/for oneself” (*zide* 自得). The spirit of self-attainment is one of the characteristics of Neo-Confucianism whether or not one uses the phrase. Readers will see the spirit of self-attainment penetrating both Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s world of thought, resulting in a

with Lin Zhaoen, the advocate of “the teaching of Three in One” (*Sanyi jiao* 三一教), who was called “Master of the Three teachings” (*Sanjiao xiansheng* 三教先生). As seen in a “tripod” metaphor for the ideal relationship of the three teachings (*sanjiao dingfen* 三教鼎分), Lin Zhanen’s syncretism was rather a “compartmentalization” than a fundamental identification of the three teachings. (For various scholars in *Sanjiao heyi*, refer to Kubota Ryoen 久保田 量遠, *Jina jubutdō kōshōshi* 支那儒仏道交渉史 (Daitō, 1943); Choe Jun-Shik 최준식 trans., *Jungguk yubuldo samkyo-ui mannam* 中國儒佛道 三教의 만남, (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1990); Edward T. Chien, *Chiao Hung and the reconstruction of Neo-Confucianism in the late Ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 1-30. For a dedicated study of Lin Zhaoen, refer to Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the three in one: the spread of a cult in Southeast China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998)) Ironically, a fundamental identification of the three teachings does not have to lay great emphasis on the thesis, *Sangjiao heyi* itself; whichever teaching is pursued, it can be regarded as reflecting the universal *Dao*.

non-partisan attitude toward learning. As far as Buddhism and Daoism contain teachings gained from self, such lessons do not have to be rejected because they certainly overlap with Confucian teachings.

Chapter III, “Yulgok on the *Laozi*: Principle, Self-cultivation, and Confucian Sages” and Chapter V, “Li Zhi on the *Laozi*: True Emptiness, Heart-Mind, and Oneness of All Myriad Things” analyze the *Sun-Eon* and the *Laozi jie*, showing how Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s understanding of the *Laozi* relate to the Cheng-Zhu and Yangming school respectively. As will be discussed, the *Sun-Eon* reflects the Neo-Confucian *li-qi* philosophy, which centers on the paradigm of the original substance (*benti* 本體) and the generation and changes (*liuxing* 流行), trying to prove the unity of these two paradigms. On the other hand, the *Laozi jie* reflects the Yangming school’s concern with the unity of the original substance (*benti*) and practical effort for self-cultivation (*gongfu* 工夫), and thus lays emphasis more on such concepts as the heart-mind and being (*you* 有)/non-being (*wu* 無) rather than *li* and *qi*. Both of them share the same Neo-Confucian framework, i.e., the unity of self-cultivation (*xiuji* 修己) and governing the people (*zhiren* 治人). However, it turns out that both Yulgok and Li Zhi understood Laozi’s philosophy to provide a succinct and yet profound insight into their Neo-Confucian philosophy.

2. Neo-Confucian attitudes toward the *Laozi*

2-1) *The Neo-Confucian reception of the Laozi since the Song dynasty*

One might want to ask why Li Zhi and Yulgok had bothered to study and comment on the *Laozi* at all. In other words, we might think that Neo-Confucians, whether they belonged to

the Cheng-Zhu school or the Yangming school, did not have any compelling reason for studying the *Laozi*, given that Neo-Confucians deemed Buddhism and Daoism, including the *Laozi*, generally as heterodoxy and heresy (*viduan xieshuo* 異端邪說).

At this point, we need to take a look at the Neo-Confucian reception of the *Laozi* since the Song dynasty. Scholars of the Ming and the Joseon including Li Zhi and Yulgok were still under the influence of Song Neo-Confucianism;¹² their intellectual background cannot, therefore, be understood without making reference to Song learning (*Songxue* 宋學). In this section, the attitudes of representative Song scholars toward the philosophy of Laozi will be examined, and it will be suggested that Neo-Confucians' attitudes toward the *Laozi* were not univocally negative.

For Neo-Confucians, the most problematic aspect of the *Laozi* is the relationship with other heterodox systems and teachings such as Legalism (*Fajia* 法家) and the school of military strategy and tactics (*Bingjia* 兵家). This attitude is best represented by Cheng Yi 程頤 (styled as Yichuan 伊川, 1033-1107),¹³ who said of the relationship between the *Laozi* and Legalism:

There are places in the *Laozi* where its words are inconsistent, [clashing with each other] like ice and hot coal. In the beginning of the book, it attempted to discuss the ultimate of the Way. However, later it adopts and makes use of machinations. Consequently there appeared the legalists, Shenbuhai 申不害 and Hanfeizi 韓非子

¹²The Ming Neo-Confucian and the best friend of Li Zhi, Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1540-1620, styled Tanyuan 澹園, Yiyuan 漪園, or Ruohou 弱侯) collected and published many records about Song scholars' and emperors' positive attitudes toward Daoism, which I will make use of. Although Jiao was a Confucian, he was sympathetic to Buddhism and Daoism. On the other hand, for Joseon Neo-Confucians, particularly the two Cheng Brothers' and Zhu Xi's positions about other teachings were the most important sources to rely on about the other teachings.

Besides Jiao Hong's work, I am also deeply indebted to Ge Zhaoguang and the authors of the *Daojia yu Zhongguozhexue* series for the historical records relevant to this study. However, I am fully responsible for possible mistakes in all the quotations, English translation, and interpretation.

¹³“Er xiansheng yu ershang” 二先生語二上, *Henan chengshi yishu* 河南程氏遺書, *juan* 2a; *Ercheng ji* 二程集 (Taipei: Hanjing wenhua, 1983), volume 1, p. 38.

after Laozi. It seems that the Way of Laozi and that of Shenbuhai and Hanfeizi are obviously incompatible with each other. But the origin [of Shenbuhai and Hanfeizi's thought] came from the *Laozi*.

老子書其言自不相入處如水炭。其初意欲談道之極處。後來却入做權詐者上去，然老子之後有申韓。看申韓與老子道甚懸絕，然其原乃自老子來。¹⁴

And he also holds that the *Laozi* provides crafty wisdom and immoral autocracy:

Master Cheng said, “The words of Laozi are mixed with machinations [for political power]. The obscurant policy of the Qin dynasty seems to have generally originated from the *Laozi*.”

程子曰，“老氏言，雜權詐，秦愚黔首，其術蓋有所自。”¹⁵

What is notable in Cheng Yi is that he saw Legalism as having stemmed from the *Laozi* although they were incompatible with each other. What, then, accounts for this? As a matter of fact, legalist thinkers and military strategists and tacticians often tend to rely on the *Laozi* as the ultimate source of their systems. Neo-Confucians usually think that the crafty legalists and military strategists promote hegemony (*badao* 霸道) and opportunism. They regard Legalism and military strategy as originating from “selfishness” (*si* 私) and “advantage” (*li* 利), i.e., a selfish desire for power and advantage.¹⁶ For Confucians,

¹⁴ “*Zhuzi*” 諸子 (Various scholars) I, (Ming 明) Hu Guang 胡廣 et al. ed., *Xingli daquan* 性理大全 (A Great Compilation of Neo-Confucian Works), *juan* 57, (Wenyuange Sikuquanshu 文淵閣四庫全書, Shangwuyin shuguan edition), 711-257a. Also in “Yichuan xiansheng yu si” 伊川先生語 4, *Henan chengshi yishu*, *juan* 18; *Erchengji*, volume 1, p. 235. Hereafter most translation of the *Laozi*, or *Daodejing* will be adapted mainly from Chan’s *A Source Book Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) and James Legge’s *THE TAO TÊ CHING*.

¹⁵ Hu Guang et al. ed., *ibid.*, 711-256.

¹⁶ Religious Daoism was also criticized by Neo-Confucians, who thought that the fascination with the so-called golden elixir for immortality (*jindan* 金丹, *waidan* 外丹) stemmed from people’s fear of death and a selfish desire for self-preservation. However, Cheng Yi did not equate the *Laozi* with religious Daoism. As seen in the above, Cheng Yi and many other Confucians used “Mr. Lao, or *Laoshi* 老氏” and “the book of Laozi, or *Laozi shu* 老子書” when they needed to discuss the philosophy of Laozi. When Cheng Yi uses “Daoism, or *Daojia* 道家,” he refers to religious Daoism. The paragraph below is Cheng’s description of the religious landscape at the time, and Daoism, or *Daojia* refers to religious Daoism.

When it comes to the harm of heterodoxies nowadays, Daoist theory does not have something worth even criticizing. Only Buddhist theory is so widespread and

selfishness is hazardous to morality; in contrast, Neo-Confucian concept of morality is characterized by “selflessness” (*wusi* 無私) and “impartiality” (*gong* 公).¹⁷ Now we can surmise that Cheng Yi regarded the *Laozi* as the “origin” of Legalism because although it discusses the “ultimate of the Way,” it lacks strong moral concerns, which opens the way for selfish thought and behavior, i.e., Legalism and despotism.

If the *Laozi* had advocated selfish desire, then obviously Li Zhi and Yulgok’s interest in the *Laozi* would have been a deviation from Confucianism; but, if there is a possibility of dissociating the *Laozi* from the “heresies,” Li Zhi and Yulgok’s interest in the *Laozi* could be justifiable from a Confucian perspective. Such a possibility was emphasized by a great but failed reformer of the Song, Wang Anshi 王安石 (1026-1086, styled Linchuan 臨川 or Jiefu 介甫). In his article about the *Zhuangzi* which encompasses the problem of Laozi as well, Wang Anshi provides an example how philosophical Daoism can be differently approached by Confucians:

People today discuss the *Zhuangzi* in different ways. Confucians say, “The *Zhuangzi* takes pains to denounce Confucius so as to lend credibility to its heterodox teaching, [so, we] have to burn the book and dismiss its followers, and then [it would be] alright. It is really not worth inquiring into the right or wrong about the book.” Confucians’ words are like this. But people who like the Way of Zhuangzi say, “The virtue of Zhuangzi is not to intervene in all myriad things, and so his virtue can follow after the Way. He is not ignorant of humanity and righteousness, but he regards humanity and righteousness as something not enough for [ideal] practice. He is not ignorant of propriety and music, but he regards propriety and music as superficial and something not enough to transform the world by. Hence, Laozi said that after the Way was lost,

delusional as to be [regarded as] extremely serious. Nowadays Buddhism is flourishing, but Daoism is desolate.

今異教之害，道家之說則更沒可闢。唯釋氏之說，衍蔓迷溺至深。今日是釋氏盛，而道家蕭索。（“Er xiansheng yu ershang” 二先生語二上, *Henan chengshi yishu* 河南程氏遺書, *juan* 2a; *Ercheng ji* 二程集 (Taipei: Hanjing wenhua, 1983), volume 1, p. 38.)

¹⁷ I infer this from Cheng Yi’s criticism of Buddhism and the general character of Neo-Confucian ethics. For Cheng’s criticism, refer to Zhu Xi and Lü Zujian 呂祖謙 ed., *Jinsi lu* 近思錄, *juan* 13; for the general importance of the concept, ‘impartiality, or *gong*’, refer to *ibid.*, *juan* 2. For an English translation, refer to Wing-tsit Chan, *Reflection on Things at Hand* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 282: “The Buddhists are fundamentally afraid of life and death and are selfish. Is theirs the way for all (*gongdao* 公道)?”

there was virtue; after virtue, humanity; after humanity, righteousness; after righteousness, propriety.’ This shows that Zhuangzi is not unacquainted with the meaning of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and music, but rather he considers them [the end] branches of the Way, and thus he just described them as superficial.” Generally speaking, Confucians’ words are [basically] good, but they have never sought the [genuine] meaning of the *Zhuangzi*; people who like the words of the *Zhuangzi*, indeed, read and know the *Zhuangzi*, but they have never sought the [genuine] meaning of the *Zhuangzi*, [too]. The benefits of the ancient sage kings had been exhausted by the time of Zhuangzi. The customs of the world [degenerated]; fraud and cheating were rampant; plainness and simplicity scattered. Even scholars and officials at the time were ignorant of the Way of cherishing oneself and slighting things. Subsequently, people discarded the impetus of propriety and righteousness; they tussled over gain and loss. Although they chased only after gain, they did not feel ashamed of it; although they died [for gain], they did not grieve over it. Thus, they got gradually contaminated and indulged in [the depravity], coming to the state in which they could not save themselves. Zhuangzi saw it as a [serious] disease, and came up with the [ironic] teachings to rectify the evil of the world and to turn it back to the right state. His thinking was too excessive, [and so] he viewed humanity, righteousness, propriety, and music as not enough by which to rectify [the world]. (Hereafter all underlining is mine)

世之論莊子者不一，而學儒者曰，莊子之書務詆孔子，以信其邪說，要焚其書，廢其徒而後可，其曲直固不足論也。學儒者之言如此，而好莊子之道者曰，莊子之德，不以萬物干慮，而能信其道者也。彼非不知仁義也，以爲仁義所以不足行己；彼非不知禮樂也，以爲禮樂薄而不足化天下。故老子曰，“道失後德；德失後仁；仁失後義；義失後禮”是知莊子非不達於仁義禮樂之義也；彼以爲仁義禮樂者道之末也，故薄之云耳。夫儒者之言善也，然未嘗求莊子之意也；好莊子之言者，固知讀莊子之書也，然亦未嘗求莊子之意也。昔先王之澤，至莊子之時竭矣。天下之俗，譎詐大作，質樸竝散，雖世之學士大夫，未有知貴己賤物之道者也，於是棄絕乎禮義之緒，奪攘乎利害之際，趨利而不以爲辱，殞身而不以爲怨，漸漬陷溺以至乎不可救已。莊子病之，思其說而矯天下之弊而歸之於正也。其心過慮，以爲仁義禮樂皆不足以正之。¹⁸

Wang interprets Zhuangzi’s (and Laozi’s) critical and sarcastic comments on Confucian virtues basically as a means to an end. In other words, for him, the *Zhuangzi* and the *Laozi* do not need to be considered as heterodoxy or heresy. The *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* seem to be reinterpreted as complementary to Confucianism by him, albeit not without reservation.

Wang goes on to say that the problem of Zhuangzi’s age was the “ignorance of the Way of cherishing oneself” (*guiji* 貴己), which no doubt relates to the Confucian motto of

¹⁸ “Zhuangzhou shang” 莊周上, *Linchuan wenji* 臨川文集, *juan* 68 (Taiwan: shangwuyin shuguan, wenyuange siku quanshu 文淵閣四庫全書), 1105-563. Also in H. R. Williamson, *Wang An Shih - A Chinese Statesman and Educationalist of the Sung Dynasty*, volume II (London: Probsthain, 1937; Hyperion Reprint, 1973), pp. 385-387. Hereafter **SKQS** for *Wenyuange Siku Quanshu*.

“learning for oneself” (*weiji zhi xue* 為己之學). The inner structure of his argument can be more clearly observed in his diagnosis of the disease of Zhuangzi’s time. According to Wang, the disease turned out to be the effect of the loss of “plainness” (*chun* 淳) and “simplicity” (*pu* 樸) which are key expressions in the *Laozi*,¹⁹ and it was followed by the deterioration of the key Confucian virtues, humanity, and righteousness. In the juxtaposition of Daoist and Confucian concepts, he seems to attempt to strengthen his suggestion of a new approach to philosophical Daoism. Wang Anshi’s approach to Laozi’s philosophy will be developed and refined by later scholars of the Song, as will be shown below.

In the latter part of the article, Wang cites a paragraph from one of the syncretic chapters (*zapian* 雜篇) of the *Zhuangzi*, “All Under Heaven” (*Tianxia* 天下), and discusses the wisdom of various scholars and schools (*zhuzibaijia* 諸子百家):

[Zhuangzi said,] “Just as the eye, ear, nose, and mouth, each faculty has its own function, and so they cannot replace each other. Likewise, various schools and diverse skills have their own strength, and thereby possess timely usefulness.” Their usefulness is that by which they illuminate the Way of the sages, but the integral [usefulness] belongs over there [i.e., the Way of the sages] but does not belong to these [i.e., various schools and diverse skills]. And so Zhuangzi himself recounts his book (teaching) with those of Song Jian 宋鉞, Shen Dao 慎到, Mo Di 墨翟, and Lao Dan 老聃, who are not complete, not universal, but [just] biased scholars. Generally they wanted to show off the teachings of theirs, and made a difference, but they could not achieve the integrity of the great Way ... Zhuangzi again said, “Mo Di is right in terms of his mind [i.e., intention], but wrong in terms of practice.” If we apply Zhuangzi’s judgment (mind) to assessing the practice of himself, how different would he be from [the case of] Mo Di?

譬如耳目口鼻，皆有所明，不能相通。猶百家衆技也，皆有所長，時有所用。用是以明聖人之道，其全在彼，而不在此，而亦自列其書於宋鉞、慎到、墨翟、老聃之徒，俱為不該、不徧、一曲之士也；蓋欲明吾之言，有為而作非大道之全云耳...莊子亦曰，墨子之心則是也；墨子之行則非也。推莊子之心以求其行，則獨何異於墨子哉？²⁰

It seems that Wang Anshi sees the *Laozi* as partial or incomplete in its articulation of the *Dao* of the sages, but it is not the source of disorderly heresies. We will see this kind of

¹⁹ For example, “*qiminchunchun* 其民淳淳” (Ch. 58), “*jiansubaopu* 見素抱樸” (Ch. 19), “*fuguizhuyi* 復歸於樸” (Ch. 28), etc.

²⁰ “Zhuangzhou shang” 莊周上, *ibid.* Also in H. R. Williamson, *ibid.*, p. 358.

syncretic grasp of the value of the *Laozi* later again, in Zhu Xi. In fact, Wang criticized Laozi in another article²¹ for the reason that Laozi neglected the institutional respect of human life and cherish something which is only profound; however, he did not identify the *Laozi* with any other teachings. His commentary on the *Laozi*²² can attest to the fact that he did not mean to deny totally the value of the *Laozi*. If the *Laozi* reflects a side of truth, what is the excellence of the *Laozi*? And then what is lacking? We will visit this problem later.

We have seen two conflicting viewpoints on the *Laozi*. Cheng Yi represents the negative attitude of Neo-Confucians toward the philosophy of Laozi, whereas Wang Anshi exemplifies a positive attitude. What were the other Neo-Confucians' attitudes toward Laozi's philosophy? One of the most influential disciples of the two Cheng brothers, Yang Shi 楊時 (styled Guishan 龜山, 1054-1135) said:

Mencius said, "That humans have the four sprouts of morality (*sidian* 四端) are like they have the four limbs." Laozi said, "When the Way is lost, does virtue (*de* 德) arise; when Virtue is lost, does humanity (*ren* 仁) arise; when humanity is lost, then does righteousness (*yi* 義) arise; when righteousness is lost, then does propriety (*li* 禮) arise. Propriety is a superficial expression of [corrupt] loyalty and faithfulness." This is just what he views as the corrupt practices of propriety in posterity. The propriety of the former sage kings is rooted in the human heart-mind, and it is that by which we express humanity (*ren* 仁) and righteousness (*yi* 義) in measured and patterned manners. Given the purpose [of propriety, humanity, and righteousness], how can there be the more important (*xian* 先) and the less important (*hou* 後) [in their values]? Although Laozi says that [propriety] is something superficial and nonessential, he means that he wants to turn people back to "plainness" (*chun* 淳) and "simplicity" (*pu* 樸), thereby remedying the problems of the time. Isn't it great if we can really return people to plainness and simplicity? However, the world has this principle; generally speaking, propriety is that by which we decorate (express) the original state of human disposition (*zhi* 質) in a patterned manner and therefore cannot augment or diminish either of them [at will]. Accordingly, if propriety is put into practice, then the Way [of the relationship] between king and subordinate, father and son is achieved; if it is got rid of for one day, then the world would be put in turmoil. If propriety was got rid of, then the Way of king and subordinate, father and son could be got rid of. Is it

²¹ "*Laozi*" 老子 (On the *Laozi*), *Linchuan wenji* 臨川文集, *juan* 68, *SKQS*, 1105-563a. Also in H. R. Williamson, *ibid.*, volume II, pp. 383-385.

²² Refer to Li Lingfeng 嚴靈峰 compile and edit., *Ji wanganshi Laozi zhu* 輯王安石老子注, *Wuqiubeizhai Laozi jicheng chupian* 無求備齋 老子集成 初編. And also quoted in (Ming 明) Jiao Hong 焦竑, *Laozi yi/Zhuangzi yi*.

acceptable? We cannot really get rid of the four sprouts. Hence, this is the reason why [Mencius said] “It is like human being having the four limbs.”

孟子言，人之有四端，猶其有四體也。老子言，失道而後德。失德而後仁。失仁而後義。失義而後禮。禮者，忠信之薄。是特見後世爲禮者之弊耳。先王之禮，本諸人心，所以節文仁義是也。顧所用如何，豈有先後？雖然老子之薄而末之者，其意欲民還淳反樸，以救一時之弊而已。夫果能使民還淳反樸，不亦善乎？然天下有此理。夫禮文其質而已，非能有所增益也。故禮行而君臣父子之道得。使一日去禮，則天下亂矣。若去禮，是去君臣父子之道也，而可乎？唯不可去此四端。所以猶人之有四體也。²³

Interestingly, Yang Shi, who believed that his learning was different from that of Wang Anshi, also seems to give a Confucianized meaning to the *Laozi*. In particular, Yang Shi’s approach seems more elaborate in making use of the specific concepts of Confucian ethics and in appreciating the meaning of Laozi’s sarcastic criticism of moral virtues. In the above quotation, the “four sprouts of morality” (*siduan*) in the *Mencius*, the “original state of human disposition” (*zhi*) in the *Analects*, and “plainness” and “simplicity” (*chun-pu*) in the *Laozi* are juxtaposed at the same level. All of them are the sources of natural morality, without which any etiquette, manners and rituals cannot have real meaning. However, when the outer appearance of propriety is overly emphasized, the original state of the heart-mind can easily be forgotten, and the practice of propriety can also be corrupt, as Confucius lamented (*Analects* 3:4, 17:11, etc). In this sense, the *Laozi* was well aligned with the Confucian classics, and helped remind us of the need to ensure that ritual action does not become divorced from moral substance. However, Yang Shi also points out that propriety is an indispensable condition of human being in the sense that the original state cannot be expressed without the language of propriety. Yang Shi’s position is not clear enough in that he does not clarify whether or not the *Laozi* can be aligned with Confucianism. The record below exemplifies the ambiguous position of Yang Shi:

Some asked Master Guishan Yang wenjingong [i.e., Yang Shi], “Somebody told that Lao Peng 老彭 [in the *Analects* 7:1]²⁴ referred to both Laozi and Peng Jian 彭錢, and

²³ Yulu 語錄, *Yang Guishan xiansheng quanji* 楊龜山先生全集, *juan* 2, (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1974), pp. 528-529.

²⁴ “I (Confucius) just write down the old and do not add to it, and I believe in and love the old. I dare to furtively compare myself to our old Peng.”

not Old Peng on account of his longevity. If it is the case, then is it true that the *Laozi* [just] transmitted the old [tradition] but did not create [something new], believing in and loving the old [tradition]?” [Yangshi] answered, “Laozi takes self-so-ness (spontaneity) as his tenet, and so it is possible to say that he does not [intend to] create [something new].”

或問龜山楊文靖公時曰，說者謂老彭乃老氏與彭籛，非謂彭之壽而謂之老彭也。然老氏之書，果述而不作，信而好古乎。答曰，老氏以自然爲宗，謂之不作，可也。²⁵

Although the above record seems to suggest that Yang Shi tried to align the *Laozi* with Confucianism, we can see how ambiguous his position was from the remarks of his student, Luo Congyan 羅從彥 (styled Yuzhang 豫章 or 仲素, 1073-1135)²⁶:

As for the *Laozi*, Confucius has not ever praised and criticized. It may be because if he praised the *Laozi*, then later scholars would be indulged in the [passive] dogma for self-preservation (*heguangtongchen* 和光同塵), going out of control; if he criticized, then the teaching, i.e., “Taking of purity and stillness as correctness of the world” would get lost. Is that desirable? [Confucius] did neither praise nor criticize [the *Laozi*]. [This is why] Confucius did not utter oversimplified [misleading] words [about the *Laozi*]. So he did not go further than saying, “I dare to furtively compare myself to our old Peng.”

老子之書，孔子未嘗譽，亦未嘗毀。蓋以謂譽之，則後世之士溺其和光同塵之說，流入於不羈。毀之，則清靜爲天下正之論其可毀乎？既不譽又不毀，其可不略言。故止謂竊比於我老彭。²⁷

Although Luo Congyan often connected the *Laozi* with Legalism, despotism, and military strategy like Cheng Yi,²⁸ the above paragraph suggests that he found the *Laozi* to be

²⁵ Jiao Hong, *ibid.*, *juan* 5, Appendix, p. 31. Unfortunately, I could not find the same paragraph both in Xuesheng shuju 學生書局 edition and *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 xupian 續篇 edition. At present, I do not know which edition of the *Guishanji* Jiao Hong read. However, this does not seem to be an interpolation because Zhu Xi commented on these words of Yang Shi. (“Da wangshang shu” 答汪尚書, *Zhuwengong ji* 朱文公集, *juan* 30; *Zhuxi ji* 朱熹集 (Chengdu: Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), volume 3, p. 1263.) Jiao Hong’s another quotation from the *Guishan ji* can be found in the present available edition: “Only after private intention is removed, can we [correctly] respond to the world. [Hence] Laozi says, ‘If impartiality is gained, then one can be qualified as a ruler.’” (Jiao Hong, *ibid.*)

²⁶ Luo was the teacher of Li Dong 李侗 (styled Yanping 延平, 1093-1163), who was one of the most influential teacher of Zhu Xi.

²⁷ Jiao Hong edit., *ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁸ He critically commented on Emperor Tai’s interest in the *Laozi*. Refer to *Luoyuzhang ji* 羅豫章集 (Shanghai: Shangwuyin shuguan, 1937), volume 2, pp. 24-25.

ambiguous, containing both profound insight and teachings that are not acceptable to a Confucian.²⁹

From Cheng Yi, Wang Anshi, Yang Shi, and Luo Conyan, we can see a wide spectrum of Neo-Confucian evaluation of the *Laozi*. Such a wide spectrum can be observed even in a single thinker, and Zhu Xi is the best example in that regard. Zhu Xi's attitude toward the *Laozi* seems hard to grasp because although overall he was strongly critical of heterodox systems, he was not unsympathetic about the *Laozi*. Zhu Xi retained Cheng Yi's criticism of the *Laozi* on the relationship with Legalism and military strategy. But like Yang Shi and Wang Anshi, he also showed support of Laozi's sarcastic criticism of Confucian virtues.³⁰ Consider, first, his explanation of the philosophy of Laozi:

Someone asked, "Yang Zhu 楊朱 held his body dear (begrudged hurting his body), and his learning was also superficial. But the world admires him. Why is it so?"

Master [Zhu Xi] said, "The learning of Yang Zhu is not superficial and has good points, which are the same as the learning of Master Lao (*Laozi zhi xue* 老子之學). As I read the *Laozi*, it contains lots of theories and talks. How can people not like it? His learning is also aimed at governing the world and becoming pure and taking no [artificial] action. This is what is referred to as "Following [Dao and nature]' is kings' fundamental principle." The ruler does everything only by following the natural

²⁹ In fact, Luo's words reflect Song intellectuals' identity. According to Peter. K. Bol, for the Song Confucian intellectuals, or *shidafu* 士大夫 (*shi* 士, *shiren* 士人), the problem of officialdom was the most serious problem because the Song intellectuals, different from the Tang aristocrat intellectuals, had to acquire official positions by taking the national examination (*keju* 科舉) and the number of positions was not enough. The orthodox learning, or *Daoxue* 道學 Neo-Confucianism provided a new concept of "learning" (*xue* 學) to give the *shidafu* class an identity without the government official position. (See *This Culture of Ours – Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford University Press, 1992).) However, if one did not want to enter into office, he could have been regarded as lacking aspiration for the Confucian ideal, i.e., government of the people as the completion of self-cultivation. Thus, Neo-Confucians always vacillated between entering officialdom and retreat for self-cultivation. This is also the trouble of Confucius. (For the ambiguous character of Confucianism and the *Confucius Analects*, refer to Choi Jin-Duk 崔真德, Kongja yinhak-ui yilkwanseong hokeun bulyilkwanseong 孔子 仁學의 一貫性 혹은 不一貫性, *Jeongshin munhwa yeonku* 정신문화연구 61 (1995):131-166.)

³⁰ Zhu Xi was interested in internal alchemical training (*neidan* 內丹) too. For Zhu Xi's understanding of Daoist philosophy and religion, refer to Julia Ching, Chu His and Taoism, in Irene Bloom and Joshua A. Fogel ed., *Meeting of the minds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp.108-143.

course [of nature and Dao]. For example, Emperor Wen of the Han [BC 202 - BC 157] and Cao Can 曹參 [?-BC 190] made use of the efficacy of Laozi's learning. However, they used only what is superficial in Laozi's learning, merely treating all affairs with tolerance and letting things be. [Nevertheless, we can think] the learning of Mr. Lao (*Laoshi zhi xue* 老氏之學) is most merciless. He looks like a weak person whose mind is vacant (*xuwu* 虛無; void and emptiness) when he is in leisure; he would not let you know the key point of business from which all things happen. Moreover, he would make it impossible for you to cope with [the situation that he manipulates]. For instance, Zhang Zifang 張子房 [i.e., Zhang Liang 張良, ? - BC 168] was a case in point. Zifang's learning was all from the learning of Mr. Lao. In the battle of Yaoguan 嶢關, Zifang tried to make peace with the Qin, but he took advantage of the relaxation of the Qin camp, and attacked it suddenly; in the case of the Honggou 鴻溝 peace treaty, he signed a peace treaty with Xiangyu 項羽 [BC 232 - BC 202], but he suddenly turned around and killed [Xiangyu]. These are all [due to] the effect of his yielding and weak tactics. How formidable it is, how formidable it is! His stratagem did not have to be many. With only two or three performances like these, the work of Gaozu 高祖 [i.e., the founding emperor of the Han, Liu Bang 劉邦, BC 202 - BC 195] was made complete.

問,“楊氏愛身,其學亦淺近,而舉世崇尚之,何也?”曰,“其學也不淺近,有好處,便是老子之學。今觀老子書,自有許多說話,人如何不愛!其學也要出來治天下,清虛無爲,所謂‘因者君之綱,’事事只是因而爲之。如漢文帝曹參,便是用老氏之效,然又只用得老子皮膚,凡事只是包容因順將去。老氏之學最忍,它閑是似箇虛無卑弱底人,莫教緊要處發出來,更教你枝梧不住,如張子房是也子房皆老氏之學。如嶢關之戰,與秦將連和了,忽乘其懈擊之;鴻溝之約,與項羽講和了,忽回軍殺之,這皆便是他柔弱之發處。可畏!可畏!它計策不須多,只消兩三次如此,高祖之業成矣。”(ZY 125:7)

Notable is that Zhu Xi adopts two different terms to refer to the philosophy of Laozi: the “learning of Master Lao” (*Laozi zhi xue*) and the “learning of Mr. Lao” (*Laoshi zhi xue*). In the early part of the paragraph, Zhu calls the philosophy of Laozi the “learning of Master Lao,” praising it as a great statecraft. In the later part, Zhu calls the philosophy of Laozi the “learning of Mr. Lao,” denouncing the learners who made a superficial use of the *Laozi* for selfish desires. Even if the distinction is not intentional, it is clear that Zhu Xi recognizes that there are two different layers in the philosophy of Laozi. Like Cheng Yi, he points out the connection between the *Laozi* and Legalism and military strategy. But, at the same time, he accepts that the original philosophy of Laozi is not reducible to Legalism and military strategy. The paragraph below highlights Zhu Xi's appreciation of the value of the *Laozi*:

Guo Deyuan asked, “Laozi said, ‘Generally, propriety is a superficial expression of [corrupt] loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder.’ Confucius went, however, to him to ask about rituals (propriety). I do not understand what the reason

was.” Wengong [i.e., Zhu Xi] said, “Laozi knew the details and intricacies of propriety [very well]. At first, I suspected that there might be two Lao Dans. The Master Hengqu [i.e., Zhang Zai] also guessed like I do. But now I’ve come to think that this cannot be the case. Laozi was once the custodian of the royal archives of the Zhou, and so he was naturally knowledgeable about rituals. Thus, he could converse with Confucius about rituals so well. He also said it would be alright not to use these things [i.e., rituals]. This is like [the ancient] sages felt rather cumbersome when they conducted rituals, and [to the same effect] Laozi said like that. Such words as ‘strategy and manipulation came into play, and military affairs arose from them’ in “*liyun*” 禮運 [of the *Liji* 禮記] have the same meaning.”

郭德元問, “老子云, ‘夫禮忠信之薄, 而亂之首.’ 孔子又却問禮於他, 不知何故?” 文公曰, “他曉得禮之曲折, 某初間疑有兩箇老聃, 橫渠亦意其如此. 今看得來, 不是如此. 他曾爲柱下史, 於禮自是理會得, 所以與孔子說得如此好. 只是他又說, 這個物事, 不用得亦可, 一似聖人用禮時, 反若多事, 所以如此說. 禮運中, ‘謀用是作, 而兵由此起’ 等語, 便自有這個意思.” (ZY 125:39)³¹

In the above, Laozi is described by Zhu as an expert in rituals, with whom Confucius had an audience. In light of this, Laozi’s sarcastic criticism of propriety is understood as deeply rooted in the Confucian value system itself, which is similar to Wang Anshi’s and Yang Shi’s approach. Zhu Xi’s positive appreciation of the *Laozi* could be supported by his comprehensive scheme for learning:

If the learning of all scholars and schools (*zhuzhe baijia* 諸者百家) originated equally from the ancient sages, then each of them would have their strengths and also they cannot but have their shortcomings. Of course, we cannot afford not to learn from their strengths, and we can also not afford not to discern their shortcomings... We cannot afford not to learn all of them.

若諸子之學, 同出於聖人, 各有所長而不能無所短. 其長者固不可以不學, 而其所短亦不可以不辨也 ... 皆不可以不之習也.³²

Zhu Xi incorporates the works of earlier philosophers into the curriculum and examination scheme in his blueprint for education because he thinks that all of them can be used for the present.³³ Since Zhu Xi believes that various teachings contain good points as they

³¹ 39th paragraph, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, *juan* 125, (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju), volume 8, p. 2997. Hereafter **ZY** for *Zhuzi yulei*, and I will use the number of *juan* 卷 and *duan* 段 (paragraph) only. For instance, 1:1 means the first chapter: the first paragraph.

³² Xuxiao gongju siyi 學校貢舉私義, *zazhu* 雜著 (Various writings), *Zhuwengongji* 朱文公集, *juan* 69; *Zhuxi ji* 朱熹集 (Chengdu: Sichuanjiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), volume 6, p. 3637.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3637. “皆可爲當世之用矣.”

originated from the ancient sages, he clarifies that even the *Hanfeizi* as well as the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* should be studied.³⁴ Zhu Xi's comprehensive view on education³⁵ is comparable with Wang Anshi's viewpoint, which is appropriated from "All Under Heaven" (*Tianxia*) of the *Zhuangzi*. And it can also be compared to the *Hanshu* 漢書 "Yiwenzhi" 藝文志, which, based on the *Book of Changes* (*Zhouyi* 周易), appreciates various scholarships:

The *Book of Changes* says, "Although the world is supposed to reach the same destination, the roads to it can be various. The culminating point [of enlightenment] is one, but the way to reach it can vary." [*Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 part 2] Now, people with various scholarships are struggling to extend their merits and exhaust wisdom and thought, thereby explicating the import [of their scholarships]. Although they have disadvantages and shortcomings, if they merge their destinations into one, then all can be the branches and offspring of the Six Classics (*liujing* 六經). If they encountered enlightened kings and sagely rulers, and get to the middle point by compromising, then they would be all [indispensable to government] like arms and legs. 易曰, 天下同歸而殊途, 一致而百慮, 今異家者, 各推所長, 窮知究慮, 以明其指. 雖有蔽短, 合其要歸, 亦六經之支與流裔. 使其人遭明王、聖主, 得其所折中, 皆股肱之材已.³⁶

Zhu Xi's appreciation of the value of the *Laozi* may be based on the *Zhouyi*, which bears on Zhu's philosophical tenet, "one principle and yet various manifestations" (*liyifenshu* 理一分殊). As Zhu himself says, we "cannot afford not to learn" the good points of the *Laozi*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, "[The category of] 'all scholars' includes Xunzi, Yang Xiong, Wang Chong, Hanfeizi, Laozi, Zhuangzi, and so on." (諸子則如荀、揚、王、韓、老、莊之屬.)

³⁵ Zhu Xi's approach is also reflected in the following account by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695):

The way of the civil service examination [for recruitment of the talented]: the assessment [system] emulates the scheme of Zhu Xi...the second round [consists of four subjects]; one subject for the six master [of Neo-Confucianism comprising] Zhou Dunyi, the two Cheng brothers, Zhang Hengqu, Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyan; one for military classics including Sunzi bingfa and Wuzi bingfa; one for Xunzi, Dong Zhongshu, Yang Xiong, Wenzhongzi, etc.; one for Guanzi, Hanfeizi, Laozi, and Zhunagzi. Every year students are examined in one subject."

科舉之法: 其考校仿朱子議 ... 第二場周、程、張、朱、陸六子為一科, 孫、吳武經為一科, 荀、董、揚、文中為一科, 管、韓、老、莊為一科, 分年各試一論. (Qushi xia 取士下, *Mingyidaifanglu* 明夷待訪錄), (*Sibubeiyao* 四部備要 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju), Haishanxian guan 海山仙館 congshu ben 叢書本, p. 9.)

³⁶ Ban Gu 班固, Yiwenzhi 藝文志, *Hanshu* 漢書, juan 30; Wang Xianjian 王先謙, *Hanshu buzhu* 漢書補注 (Xinwenfeng chubangongsi 新文豐出版公司, 1975), p. 0873.

though equally we “can also not afford not to discern” its bad points. And learning will at last get to the one ultimate principle. Zhu Xi’s suggestion for school education seems to provide students with the reason for studying the *Laozi*, regardless of the degree of acceptance of the philosophy of Laozi.

Then, how does Zhu Xi justify his syncretic viewpoint on the value of various scholars and schools in his plan for study and practice (*gongfu lun* 工夫論)? The paragraph below provides a clue:

In learning, one must first establish the great foundation (lit. “root”). In the beginning, it is very precise; in the intermediate phase, it becomes vast; at the end, it becomes again precise. Mencius says, “Wide learning and detailed explanation aim eventually to return to precise explanation” [4B:15]. Accordingly, one must read the Confucian *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Great Learning*, and *Book of the Mean*, thereby pondering on the meaning of the Sages and Worthies. In reading histories, one can ponder on the traces of the survival and fall, peace and turbulence [of dynasties]; in reading the various scholars and schools, one must see the problems of their diverse and miscellaneous nature. There should be proper stages and order [to learning], which one cannot skip and jump over. Recent learners like to follow preciseness too much, and do not seek [the Way] through learning widely. They do not know that if they do not seek learning widely, they cannot expect and experience the preciseness [in learning].

爲學須是先立大本, 其初甚約, 中間一節甚廣大, 到末梢又約。孟子曰 博學而詳說之, 將以反說約也。故必先觀論、孟、大學、中庸, 以考聖賢之意, 讀史以考存亡治難之迹, 讀諸子百家, 以見其駁雜之病。其節目自有次序, 不可踰越。近日學者, 多喜從約, 而不於博求之。不知不求於博, 何以考驗其約。³⁷

For Zhu Xi, therefore, the study of the *Laozi* can be justified as part of the process of “investigation of things” (*gewu* 格物) and “extension of knowledge” (*zhizhi* 致知),³⁸ which is supposed to help “exhaust the principle” (*qiongli* 窮理).

Now we briefly discuss Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s views on the *Laozi*, which extended further their Song predecessors’ legitimization of studying the *Laozi*. In his major work, the *Gist of the Sagely learning* (*Seonghak jipyo* 聖學輯要), Yulgok pays attention to Zhen Dexiu’s 真德秀 (styled Jingxi 景希, 1178-1235) comment on the *Laozi*:

³⁷ “Dushu fa” 讀書法 2, Xue 學 12, *Xingli daquan* 性理大全, *juan* 54, *SKQS*, 711-195. Originally from *ZY* 11:91.

³⁸ Refer to Zhu Xi’s commentary on the *Analects*, or *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集註, 9:10.2 (“博我以文, 約我以禮” - “侯氏曰, 博我以文, 致知格物也; 約我以禮, 克己復禮”).

Zhen Dexiu said, “[The words of] Laozi cover many [subjects]. [His words regarding] “no-action” and “no-desire” are comparable with [Confucian] principle, so even the Confucian gentlemen can take them. [Laozi’s words about] nurturing one’s life are admired by the practitioners of Daoist alchemy. [Such words as] ‘If one wants to snatch [something], one needs to give, first’ are the words for machinations, which are admired by military strategists. [Laozi’s] regarding things as something like dregs, and regarding emptiness as the marvelous function are emulated by the pure conversationists [of Wei-Jin Neo-Daoism]. If we talk about [Laozi’s] words that are close to Principle, there is something worth taking indeed. But all those things are something [already] possessed by our [Confucian] sages. [Other sayings] that are lower than those [in quality] are so one-sided and partial that the evil effect is indescribable ... Although the learning of Laozi and Zhuangzi did not get to this [state] in the beginning, there was the initial difference [between their learning and our Confucian learning], and thus the branches of their learning became such extremes.

真氏曰, 老子所該者衆. 無爲、無欲 近理之言, 雖君子有取焉; 養生之言 爲方士者尙焉; 將欲奪之, 必固與之. 此陰謀之言也, 兵者尙焉; 其以事物爲粗迹、以空虛爲妙用, 清談者倣之. 自其近理者言之, 固在所可取. 然皆吾聖人之所有也. 下乎此, 則一偏、一曲之學, 其弊有不勝言者 ... 雖老莊之學初未至此, 然本原一差, 其流必有甚焉.³⁹

In terms of appreciating the value of the *Laozi*, Zhen Dexiu seems more elaborate than Zhu Xi. As discussed earlier, for Zhu Xi, the issue in studying the *Laozi* was which factors of Laozi’s philosophy are to be appreciated as good points or discerned as bad points. In line with Zhu Xi, Zhen Dexiu recounts both the good and bad points in detail. This could be the reason why Yulgok quoted Zhen’s words. In the *Sun-Eon*, Yulgok clarifies his view on the *Laozi*:

The meanings of [Laozi’s] words such as “mastering oneself [so as] to restrain desire,” “stillness and gravity [so as to] keep self secure,” “humbleness [so as to] cultivate self,” and “benevolence and plainness [whereby] to govern the people” are really meaningful and useful to learners. We should not say that we must not take a look at it because the *Laozi* is not the book of Confucian sages.

其言克己窒慾、靜重自守、謙虛自牧、慈簡臨民之義, 皆親切有味有益於學者. 不可以謂非聖人之書, 而莫之省也.⁴⁰

³⁹ The *Gist of the Sagely learning*, or *Seonghak jipyo* 聖學輯要, Vol.2, Kungli jang 窮理章, The complete works of Yulgok, or the *Yulgok jeonseo* 栗谷全書, *juan* 20 (Seoul: Daedong munhwa yeonkuwon, 1978), p. 63; The Complete Korean Translation of the *Yulgok jeonseo*, or the *Kukyeok Yulgok jeonseo* 國譯 栗谷全書 (Seongnam: The Academy Korean Studies, 1987), Vol.5, p. 89. Hereafter **SHJY** for *Seonghak jipyo*, **CWYG** for *Yulgok jeonseo*, and **PTYJ** for *Kukyeok Yulgok jeonseo*.

⁴⁰ Preface by Yulgok, *Sun-Eon* 醇言 (Seoul: Ryeokang chulpansa, 1984), photocopy edition, p. 60. This is the photocopy of the hand-written copy of the original woodblock print edition. A handwritten copy is preserved in the inner Royal library of Joseon dynasty (*Kyujanggak*). Hereafter **SE** for the *Sun-Eon* (page reference will follow the photocopied edition of Ryeokang chulpansa).

Generally, what it calls “flexibility (*yu/rou* 柔)” refers to the [outer] shape of *yin/ren* 仁 (humanity) and *ja/ci* 慈 (benevolence) only; it does not mean that it is flexible and weak all through. If it is flexible and weak all through, how can it overcome sturdiness and violence? And what is meant by overcoming is nothing other than the result of the natural course of *li* and *se/shi* [the tendency of situation]; it does not mean that she/he has a mind to overcome others, and thereby [deliberately] tries to be flexible and weak. 夫所謂柔者, 只言仁慈之形耳, 非一於柔弱而已。若一於柔弱, 則豈能勝剛暴哉。且其勝之者 亦出於理勢之當然耳, 非有心於欲勝而故為柔弱也。⁴¹

Yulgok basically follows the position of Zhu Xi and Zhen Dexiu, but Yulgok’s position may be considered more affirmative of the philosophy of Laozi in that he does not hold that all good points in the *Laozi* are already in Confucianism so that one may put aside the *Laozi* after discerning what is right and wrong in it. Yulgok does not classify and recount the good and bad points of the *Laozi* as Zhen Dexiu does; more important, he does not regard the points of the *Laozi* as associable with Legalism and military strategy.

Li Zhi’s view on other teachings than Confucianism can be said to be more open-minded and overt than Yulgok’s; Li’s position needs to be understood as a challenge to the institutionalized Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy at the time:

Generally speaking, once *Dao* is discussed, then the heart-mind is concerned. Hence, how could there be [fundamental] differences between them? Even stupid men and women, and insects and plants cannot be outside *Dao* and the heart-mind, of course, not to speak of the three teachings’ sages ... Do not denounce Laozi and Buddha; do not depreciate Daoist immortals and the enlightened. [To denounce and depreciate Daoism and Buddhism is] to copy and follow what comes from absurdity and impure words, which is also to blindly follow superficial opinions of the end of Song. [This kind of behavior can be regarded as] the present bidding defiance to the past, the lower betraying the above, and destroying the people.

夫既謂之道謂之心矣, 則安有異哉, 則雖愚夫愚婦以及昆蟲草木, 不能出於此道此心之外也, 而況三教聖人哉。…非毀老佛, 輕詆仙釋。唯勦襲胡元穢說, 雷同宋末膚見。是生今反古, 居下倍上, 大戮之民也。⁴²

Li Zhi’s open-minded attitude toward the *Laozi* originates from the Yangming school’s relatively flexible stance about Buddhism and Daoism:

⁴¹ *SE* Ch.14.

⁴² “Sanjiao pin xu” 三教品序 (Preface to the *Sanjiao pin*), *Lishi congshu* 李氏叢書, *juan* 23 (Peking University archives), pp. 1b-3b; the same title, *Zashu* 雜述 4, *Liwenling ji* 李溫陵集, *juan* 10.

The effects of Laozi and Buddha's teaching are all the effect of our Confucianism. In other words, if I can exhaust my nature and understand my destiny, thereby completing the cultivation of my body, then I can be called a Daoist immortal; if not polluted by the worldly desires, I can be called a Buddha. However, Confucians in later periods do not understand the wholeness of Confucianism. Accordingly, they [deliberately] constitute a separate theory different from Laozi and Buddha.

二氏之用, 皆我之用, 即吾盡性至命中完養此身謂之仙, 即吾盡性至命中不染世累謂之佛。但後世儒者不見聖學之全, 故與二氏成二見耳。⁴³

Wang Yangming thinks that it is not necessary to demarcate the borders between Confucianism and other teachings because the most important issue in learning should be whether or not one can exhaust and understand one's nature and destiny, which are endowed by Heavenly principle and possessed by everyone including Buddhists and Daoists. When Yangming said, "It is called universal virtue (*tongde* 同德) that one shares with ordinary men and women; it is called 'heresy' that which differs from what is common to ordinary men and women,"⁴⁴ he seems to have paved the way for Li Zhi's more radical perspective on various teachings. In his argument on the three teachings, Li Zhi becomes more radical than Yangming, asserting that all teachings are one because they have the same origin, the Way (*Dao* 道) and the same ultimate goal, "transcendence or emancipation" (*chushi* 出世).⁴⁵ In the

⁴³ In the Mount Xiao 蕭, Nov., 1523 (the lunatic calendar), *Nianpu* 年譜, *Wang yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *juan* 35 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992).

⁴⁴ "與愚夫愚婦同德,是謂同德。與愚夫愚婦異的,是謂異端," Chan Wing-tsit 陳榮捷 ed., *Case (tiao 條) 271*, Huang Shengzeng lu 黃省曾 錄, *Zhuanxi lu* 傳習錄, *juan* 3 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1983). The above English translation is adapted from Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom – The Way of Wang Yang-ming* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 146. For translation of the *Zhuanxi lu*, I consulted Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Writings By Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); Julia Ching, *ibid.*, and *The Philosophical Letters of Wang Yang-ming* (University of South Carolina, 1972); Frederick Goodrich Henke, *The Philosophy of Wang Yang-Ming* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Co., 1964). I consulted Korean translations as well: Han Jeong-Kil 韓正吉 and Jeong Yin-Jae 鄭仁在, *Jeonseup rok* 傳習錄 I and II (Seongnam: Chengkye, 2001); Song Ha-Kyeong 宋河璟, in Ryu Jeong-Dong 柳正東 ed., *Jeonseup rok, Saekyeo-ui dae sasang* 世界의 大思想 30 (Seoul: Hwi'mun chulpansa, 1976), pp. 265-488. Hereafter **ZXL** for the *Zhuanxi lu*.

⁴⁵ However, he does not think that 'transcendence' has nothing to do with ruling the world. Rather he holds that 'transcendence' is a necessary condition of ruling the world. This will be discussed later in detail. Refer to *Sanjiao guirushuo* 三教歸儒說, *Xu fenshu* 續焚書,

Laozi jie, Li Zhi strongly asserts that the import of the *Laozi* is governing the county and has nothing to do with Legalism and military strategy:

Li Zhi says, “Whenever I read the chapter, ‘Jielao’ 解老 (explication of the meaning of the *Laozi*) of the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, I haven’t had an occasion in which I do not feel sorry about Hanfei. Despite his capabilities, he was in the end killed by the emperor of the Qin. How can we say he [understood and] explicated the *Laozi* well, then? How is it called [a result of good understanding of] no-action (*wuwei* 無爲)! Generally speaking, the enlightened (that, or *bi* 彼) take advantage of softness and weakness (*rouuo* 柔弱), whereas the ignorant (this, or *ci* 此), hardness and strength (*jianqiang* 堅強); the ignorant are brave in daring to do, whereas the enlightened are brave in daring not to do. [The difference between the enlightened and the ignorant are] already indeed like that between either square and circle or ice and hot coal. Nevertheless, is it possible to say “The *Laozi* is the origin of Legalism of Shen Buhai and Hanfeizi”? Su Zizhan 蘇子瞻 sought but failed to gain [the meaning of the *Laozi*], and so he forced his words, “The learning of Laozi thinks much of no-action and slights ruling the world and country, thereby saying that humanity is not enough for love and propriety is not enough to respect. What Hanfei gained from the *Laozi* was the teaching of slighting the world. Accordingly, [Hanfei] got to the state of cruelty and harshness, but he had no doubt about it.” Alas! If the observation is like this, then [Laozi’s teaching] would not be possible to use for ruling the world and country. [But] is the learning of Laozi like this indeed?

李贊曰，嘗讀韓非解老，未始不爲非惜也。以非之才，而卒見殺于秦，安在其爲善解老也！是豈無爲之謂哉！夫彼以柔弱，而此以堅強；此勇于敢，而彼勇于不敢。固已方圓冰炭若矣，而謂“道德申韓宗祖”可歟？蘇子瞻求而不得，乃強爲之說曰，老子之學，重于無爲而輕于治天下國家，是以仁不足愛而禮不足敬。韓非氏得其所以輕天下之術，遂至殘忍刻薄而無疑。嗚呼！審若是，則不可以治天下國家也。老子之學果如是乎？⁴⁶

Judging from the various attitudes of the Song Neo-Confucians, Zhu Xi, and Yangming toward Daoist philosophy, Neo-Confucian study of the *Laozi* was not entirely impossible although they classified Daoism as a heresy. The *Laozi* was recognized as a source of ancient wisdom. In this sense, Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s study of the *Laozi* did not totally deviate from Neo-Confucianism, and their attitudes toward other teachings than Confucianism were developed from the predecessors, rather than a shift from them. We will discuss

Fenshu/Xu fenshu 焚書/續焚書, Fajia lei 法家類, Zibu 子部, Sibü Kanyao 四部刊要 (Taipei: Hanjing wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1984), p. 75; *Lizhi wenji* 李贊文集, volume 1, edited by Zhang Jianye 張建業 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000), p. 72. From now on, as to the *Fenshu* and *Xu fenshu*, I quote only from ‘Sibü Kanyao’ edition that use the traditional characters. But for other works of Li Zhi, I will quote from the *Lizhi wenji* edition. Hereafter **LZWJ** for the *Lizhi wenji*, **FS** for the *Fenshu*, and **XFS** for the *Xu Fenshu*.

⁴⁶ Preface of the *Laozi jie*, **LZWJ**, volume 7.

Yulgok's and Li Zhi's radical open-mindedness toward other teachings in Chs. 2 and 4, in greater detail.

2-2) *Neo-Confucians' trouble with the equivocal Dao and li*

In the above section, the various attitudes of Neo-Confucians toward the *Laozi* have been discussed. This section will argue that Neo-Confucians had trouble with the concept of the Way (*Dao*) in the *Laozi*, which is of great importance to Neo-Confucianism as well. As will be seen, the Neo-Confucian compliment and accusation of Laozi's philosophy relates to their attention to the *Book of Changes* (*Zhouyi* 周易). They found that the *Zhouyi* has striking similarities with the *Laozi*, and thus they wanted to clarify the relationship between them.

Cheng Hao 程顥 (styled Mingdao 明道, 1032-1085) and Cheng Yi said:

C1 There are good points in Zhuangzi's words that describe the substance of *Dao* (*Daoti* 道體). Mr. Lao's chapter of "the spirit of valley (*gushen* 谷神) never dies" [*Laozi* Ch. 6] is most excellent."
莊生形容道體之語, 儘有好處. 老氏谷神不死一章最佳.⁴⁷

C2 The [mechanism of] giving and grasping, contracting and expanding [in the *Laozi*] is what is [already] contained in Principle (*li* 理). However, the words of Laozi are not [morally] correct [because Laozi's] intention of giving is nothing more than taking and his intention of expanding is contracting. [Therefore] it is the skill of machinations.
予奪翕張, 理所有也. 而老子之言, 非也. 與之之意乃在乎取之, 張之之意乃在乎翕之之意, 權詐之術也.⁴⁸

From the above quotes, we see that the two Cheng brothers held two opposite judgments of the philosophy of Laozi, and that both judgments revolve around the concepts of the Way (*Dao*) and Principle (*li*).

Cheng Yi (and later, Zhu Xi) once praised the *Laozi* Ch. 6 for being comparable with the great virtue of the cosmos, "*shengsheng* 生生" (ceaseless production),⁴⁹ which refers to

⁴⁷ "Er xiansheng yu san" 二先生語 三, *Henan chengshi yishu*, *juan* 3: *Erchengji*, volume 1, p. 64.

⁴⁸ "Zhuizi yi" 諸子一, *Xingli daquan* 性理大全, *juan* 57, *SKQS*, 711-256 and 257.

none other than the Neo-Confucian *li*. Thus, it is certain that “*Daoti*” of the *Zhuangzi* and “*gushen*” of the *Laozi* Ch. 6⁵⁰ are understood as tantamount to the Neo-Confucian “*li*” by the two Cheng brothers. However, in C2, the two Cheng brothers hold that Laozi’s *Dao*, which is seen to be the same as the Neo-Confucian *li*, lapses into machinations. In the *Laozi*, *Dao* is marked with *ziran* and *wuwei*: “*Dao* emulates self-so-ness (*ziran*)” (道法自然, *Laozi* Ch. 25); “*Dao* is always doing nothing (*wuwei*), yet it leaves nothing undone” (道常無爲而無不爲, *Laozi* Ch. 37). Hence, *Dao* is understood not to have consciousness or intention to be assessed

⁴⁹ Refer to Wing-tsit Chan, Chu Hsi and Taoism, *Chu Hsi: New Studies* (Hawaii Univ. Press, 1989), p. 497 and Julia Ching, Chu Hsi and Taoism, *ibid.*, p. 111. Chan and Ching refer to *Henan chengshi yishu* 3:4b and 12:5b, respectively. “Yichuan xiansheng yu 4” 伊川先生語四, *juan* 17, *ibid.* contains the same comparison.

⁵⁰ The subsequent phrases in the *Laozi* Ch.6 are the “gate of the dark female” (*Xuanpin zhi men* 玄牝之門) and the “root of Heaven and Earth” (*Tiandi gen* 天地根), which stand for the origin of cosmos. At this point, to understand why the two Cheng brothers regard the *Laozi* Ch.6 as describing *li*, we need to consult Wang Bi’s 王弼 (226-249) commentary on the same chapter of the *Laozi*. As is seen below, Wang Bi’s understanding of the spirit of valley is based on such concepts as *Dao* and the Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極), which are no less than *li* in Neo-Confucianism. (Julia Ching already pointed out that Zhu Xi’s metaphysical understanding of the *Laozi* 6 is close to Wang Bi’s commentary. I think that the two Cheng brothers’ understanding is also close to Wang Bi’s. See her *Chu Hsi and Taoism*, *ibid.*, p. 133 (14th endnote)).

It (*xuanpin* 玄牝) is rooted where it is originated (*xuanpin zhi men* 玄牝之門), which [shares] the same body with the [Great] Ultimate, and therefore is called the root of Heaven and Earth. Even if we wanted to say, ‘it exists,’ we would not be able to see its [outer] feature; even if we wanted to say, ‘it does not exist,’ all myriad things would come into being because of it.⁵⁰

本其所由, 與[太]極同體, 故謂之天地之根也。欲言存邪, 則不見其形; 欲言亡邪, 則萬物以之生。(Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, *Wangbi ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋 (Taipei: Huazheng shuju, 1992), p. 16. Hereafter **WBJJ** for the *Wangbi ji jiaoshi*.)

Unless otherwise mentioned, all translation of Wang Bi’s commentary in this thesis is mine. However, for translation, I consulted: Rump, Ariane, and Wing-tsit Chan, trans., *Commentary on the Lao-tze by Wang Bi* (University Press of Hawaii, 1979) and *A Sourcebook in Chinese philosophy* by Wing-tsit Chan, pp. 321-324; Alan K.L. Chan, *ibid.*; Yim Chae-Wu 임채우, *Wangpil-ui noja – mu-ui cheolhak-eul yeon wangpil-ui naja yilki* 왕필의 노자 – ‘무’의 철학을 연 왕필의 노자읽기 (Seoul: Yemunseowon, 1997); Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of the Way and virtue – a new translation of the Tao-te ching of Laozi as interpreted by Wang Bi* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1999); Rudolf G. Wagner, *A Chinese reading of the Daodejing – Wang Bi’s commentary on the Laozi with critical text and translation* (NY: SUNY, 2003).

as moral or immoral. The *Laozi* Ch. 5 suggests this amoral quality of *Dao*: “Heaven and Earth are not humane” (*tiandi buren* 天地不仁). Interesting is that the two Cheng brothers understand that *li* originally has such an amoral quality (“*giving and grasping, contracting and expanding*”) that can be taken advantage of by Laozi. This reveals that even the Neo-Confucian *li* concept cannot but have such an amoral aspect. In fact, this concept of the amorality of *li* relates to the *Attached Verbalization* (*Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳), which exerted a great influence on Neo-Confucian studies of the *Book of Changes*. The criticism of the *Laozi* below attests to this:

The words of Laozi are a furtive manipulation of the opening and closing [i.e., the dynamics of the cosmos].

老子之言，竊弄闔闢者也。⁵¹

Laozi says “no-action,” and he also says, “No-action and yet nothing gets undone.” This should mean that he must take action, but such action is carried out with no-action. This is still a way of action. When the sages created the *Yi*, they never mentioned “no-action.” They just said, “[The prognostication of the *Zhouyi* should be by means of] no deliberation and no-action.” This warns against “deliberate action.” And it is subsequently followed by the words, “Not moving and still, [however, once] he feels, and then penetrates into the mechanism [i.e., the cause and effect] of the world,” [Xici zhuan A:10] which is the principle [penetrating] stillness and movement, and is not a biased teaching.

老子曰，“無為，”又曰，“無為而無不為。”當有為而以無為為之，是乃有為為也。聖人作易，未嘗言無為，惟曰，“無思也，無為也。”此戒夫作為也；然下即曰，“寂然不動，感而遂通天下之故，”是動靜之理，未嘗為一偏之說矣。⁵²

Noteworthy is that the first paragraph uses the terms and sentences quoted from the *Xici zhuan*; “opening and closing” (*hepi* 闔闢) bear on the image of gate (*men* 門) and door (*hu* 戶) and are used for the fundamental function of the cosmos (the *Qian* 乾 and the *Kun* 坤, *Xici zhuan* A:11 and *Wenyan zhuan* 文言傳). This cosmic process has neither deliberation nor (impositional) action. Thus, the process for prognostication in the *Zhouyi* emulates such

⁵¹ “Mingdao xiansheng yu yi” 明道先生語 一, *Henan chengshi yishu*, juan11; *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 121.

⁵² “Er xiansheng yu wu” 二先生語 五, *Henan chengshi yishu*, juan 5; *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 68.

cosmic process. But Cheng Hao thinks that the *Laozi* contains this idea of the *Zhouyi* although he says that Laozi just manipulates his situations in using the idea; the sentences from the *Xici zhuan* A:10 are compared with the *Laozi* in order to criticize the *Laozi*. However, it should be recognized that the idea of the *Laozi* may have been paid attention to, in the beginning, because of the striking similarity with the *Xici zhuan* in both terminology and syntax.

From the foregoing, it can be suggested that the two Cheng brothers' inconsistency of the assessment of Laozi's philosophy originates from the similarity between *Dao* in the *Laozi* and that in the *Zhouyi*. Zhu Xi's vacillation about the *Laozi* has the same origin as that of the two Cheng brothers:

Bofeng asked, "Master Cheng said that the words of Laozi are a furtive manipulation [to play on the mechanism] of the opening and closing [i.e., positive and negative movements of the cosmos]. [What do you think of his words?]" Master Zhu said, "Sayings like 'in order to grasp, it is necessary to give first' are of this kind. It is also the case that Laozi had a glimpse of the Way and Principle, on which he tries to manipulate."

伯豐問，程子曰，老子之言，竊弄闢闢者也？曰，如“將欲取之，必固與之”之類，是他亦窺得此道理，將來竊弄。(ZY 125:5)

Shao Kangjie earlier said, "Laozi attained [the enlightenment of] the substance of the *Zhouyi*, and Mencius attained [the enlightenment of] the function of it." [But I think] this is incorrect [because] Laozi has the substance and function of his own, and Mencius has also his own. 'In order to grasp, it is necessary to give first'—this is Laozi's [understanding of] substance and function; for Mencius, it is preserving the heart-mind and nurturing nature, thereby extending the four sprouts of morality.

康節嘗言，“老氏得易之體，孟子得易之用，”非也。老子自有老子之體用，孟子自有孟子之體用。“將欲取之，必固與之。”此老子之體用也；存心養性，充廣基四端，此孟子之體用也。(ZY 125:1)

Chen Zhongheng asked, "I heard that the *Record of the Zhou* (*Zhoushu* 周書) says, 'In order to defeat them, it is necessary to help them first. In order to grasp something, it is necessary to give first.' Why is it that now the *Zhoushu* [in the present version of the *Book of History* (*Shujing* 書經)] does not have this sentence?" Master Wengong [i.e., Zhu Xi] said, "These are a couple of phrases from the *Laozi*. [I guess that] there might be this book [i.e., the *Zhoushu*] at the time of Laozi. Since Laozi was the custodian of the royal library, he therefore read a lot [of books]. So it is said that Confucius went to the Zhou and asked [Laozi] about rites and so on."

陳仲亨問，周書曰，“將欲敗之，必姑輔之，將欲取之，必姑與之。”今周書何緣無之？文公曰，此便是老子裏數句。是周時有這般書。老子爲柱下史，故多見之。孔子所以適周問禮之屬也。⁵³

In the first passage, Zhu Xi's criticism of the *Laozi* is the same as that of the two Cheng brothers. But Zhu accepts the fact that Laozi penetrates into the Way and principle of nature which can be compared to the insight of the *Zhouyi*. In the second passage, he converses with a disciple about the words of Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077, styled as Kangjie 康節). Zhu Xi does not explicitly criticize Shao Yong's use of the *Zhouyi* in his comparison between Laozi and Mencius, but in the later part of the conversation, Zhu Xi seems to regard the *Laozi* as less morally motivated than Mencius. However, in the third passage, we can see a slightly different attitude of Zhu Xi. Here, Zhu makes a conjecture that the *Laozi* Ch. 36 comes from a lost ancient classics, the *Zhoushu*. It appears to have originated from the two Cheng brothers' compliment of the *Laozi*, due to the similarity between the *Laozi* and the *Xici zhuan*.

Judging from the above, although Zhu Xi basically accepts the affinity between the philosophy of Laozi and Confucian classics, particularly the *Zhouyi*, he seems to vacillate in understanding the implication of Laozi's *Dao* or *li* – whether or not it is moral. The paragraph below shows Zhu's trouble with Laozi's *Dao*:

Dao is the principle by which the past and the present are originated. For example, parents' benevolence, sons' filial piety, rulers' humanity, and subordinates' loyalty are all one common principle. Virtue (*de* 德) is what we gain from *Dao* in our bodies (*Dao* as embodied in our bodies). For instance, in the case of the ruler, [the virtue] ought to be humanity; for the subordinate, loyalty, and so forth. All these are spontaneously what we gain in our bodies... [When] Laozi said, "Only when *Dao* is lost, does virtue arise," he was not aware that he had divided *Dao* into two things, and so he viewed *Dao* as an empty and hollow thing [, so that *Dao* has nothing to do with moral virtues]. We, Confucians speak of it as just one thing; there has been only one universal [*Dao*] since ancient times till now. When it is not in our bodies, it is called *Dao*. Virtue [is used] when we gain this *Dao* completely in us. Laozi says, "Only when *Dao* is lost, does virtue arise; only when Virtue is lost, does humanity arise; when humanity is lost, then does righteousness arise." If [*Dao*] is separate from humanity and righteousness,

⁵³ Yan Lingfeng 嚴靈峯 compile and edit., *Zhuxi Laozi jie* 朱熹老子解 (Zhu Xi's interpretation of the *Laozi*), *Laozi Songzhu congcan* 老子宋注叢殘 (A Collection of the remains of the Song commentaries on the *Laozi*) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1979), p. 126.

then there would not be the Way and principle [any longer]. Moreover, how can it be *Dao*!

道者,古今共由之理,如父之慈,子之孝、君仁、臣忠是一箇公共底道理。德,便是得此道於身,則爲君必仁,爲臣必忠之類,皆是自有得於己…老子說,“失道而後德。”他都不識,分做兩箇物事,便將道做一箇空無底物事看。吾儒說只是一箇物事。以其古今公共是這一箇,不著人身上說,謂之道。德,卽是全得此道於己。他說,“失道而後德,失德而後仁,失仁而後義。”若離了仁義,便是無道理了,又更如何是道! (ZY 13:62)

Zhu Xi asserts that *Dao* ought to be the source of the social norms, and that *Dao* and virtues cannot be separated. This idea is obviously based on the relationship between *li* and [human] nature (*xing* 性) in Neo-Confucianism.⁵⁴ Since *Dao* or *li* is regarded as the source of the innately good [human] nature (“Nature is principle” (*xing ji li* 性即理)), Zhu Xi thinks that Laozi’s philosophy has a big problem in terms of ethics, although Zhu approves of Laozi’s criticism of formalistic performance of Confucian rituals.

However, there is a problem in Zhu Xi’s recognition of the concept of *Dao* and *li*. As is seen earlier, the two Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi compared the Laozi’s *Dao* with the Neo-Confucian *li*, i.e., the philosophy of Change (*yi* 易), suggesting that both of them are the ultimate pattern or principle in the dynamics of the cosmos (“opening and closing”). That ultimate pattern of the cosmos is basically amoral since it has no deliberation to produce intentional moral behaviors. However, when human nature is defined as originating from *Dao*, a series of questions can be raised: how can such *prima facie* amoral *Dao* (*li*) translate into the moral principle in the world?; is the innate goodness of human nature (*xingshan*) possible if Neo-Confucianism regard their *li* as comparable to the Laozi’s *Dao*?; is Laozi’s *Dao* totally irrelevant to ethics? In this sense, the Neo-Confucian *li* concept seems not clear, and so is the Laozi’s *Dao*. As will be discussed, this problem underlies both Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s commentaries on the *Laozi*.

⁵⁴ Zhu Xi projects Neo-Confucianism on the *Laozi*, but it seems not so awkward in terms of the composition of the relationship. This is fully discussed by Yulgok, as further discussed in Ch.3.

II. Yulgok: *Self-attainment as the Pivot for Learning*

1. *Yulgok: A Buddhist in Confucian Guise?*

One day, in the spring of 1558, in mid Joseon Korea, a 22-year-old ambitious young scholar sought an audience with a great master, Yi Hwang 李滉 (Toegye) of that time. The young scholar was Yi Yi 李珥 (Yulgok), who would soon rank with Toegye in both academia and office. To mark the occasion with courtesy, Yulgok composed a poem:

This stream is a branch of the Zhu and Si Rivers;	溪分洙泗派,
This peak is as excellent as the Wuyi Mountains.	峰秀武夷山,
Making a living just by a thousand classics;	活計經千卷,
Dwelling in a simple hermitage.	行藏屋數間,
A bright moon comes forth from your bosom;	襟懷開霽月,
Your talk and smile stop the crazy waves.	談笑止狂瀾,
I've come here to seek to hear the Way;	小子求聞道,
Not to steal moments of leisure.	非偷半日閒. ⁵⁵

Yulgok pays the greatest homage to Toegye by describing the natural environment where he lives in seclusion as comparable to those of Confucius and Zhu Xi and comparing his personality to Zhou Dunyi's 周敦頤 ("a bright moon").⁵⁶ The obvious implication of this poem is that Toegye's learning corresponds with and directly succeeds the genealogy of the Way (*dotong* 道統 [Chi. *daotong*]) of the Song Neo-Confucians, and that Yulgok himself also wants to learn the Way and place himself in that lineage.⁵⁷ It should also be noted that at the

⁵⁵ "Soe-Eon" 瑣言 (Trivial Words), Japjeo 雜著 (Various Writing) (I), *CWYG*, *kwon* 卷 14; *PTYJ* (IV), pp. 37-38.

⁵⁶ From Huang Tingjian's 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) description of Zhou Dunyi, "His personality is exceedingly noble,/ harboring in his chest purity and high-mindedness,/ like the flowing wind and the bright moon (人品甚高, 胸懷灑落, 如光風霽月)" (See (Yuan 元) Tuo Tuo 脫脫 et al., "Zhou Dunyi zhuan" 周敦頤傳, "*Daoxue* 道學" 1, "Liezhuàn 列傳" 186, *Songshi* 宋史 *juan* 427, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), volume 36, p. 12711.)

⁵⁷ This poem can also be said to presage the self-identity of Joseon Neo-Confucianism that was soon to be reified; the five Korean Neo-Confucians including Yi Toegye were enshrined next to the Song Masters in 1610, which means that the Joseon Neo-Confucians regarded themselves as the direct successors of the Song Neo-Confucianism. This constitution of the shrine was obviously different from that of the Ming, where Liu Jiuyan

time, due to a series of literati purges in the court, many Neo-Confucian scholar-officials sought seclusion from the political arena.⁵⁸ Especially, the scholar-officials from the orthodox Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian tradition (*sarim pa* 士林派) were deeply traumatized by the nature of the actual politics and the brutal purges. This is why Toegye retreated to the country, immersing himself in self-cultivation as well as education.

In the reply poem,⁵⁹ Toegye commended Yulgok's excellence as a scholar. Toegye remembered the words of Confucius, "Those who come after [i.e., the younger generation] deserve respect" ("Housheng kewei" 後生可畏, *Analects* 9:22), and admonished Yulgok, in the manner of Cheng Yi 程頤, of the peril of indulging literary talent.⁶⁰ In fact, as the Annals of the Joseon Dynasty, *Joseon wangjo shilrok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (Hereafter, the *Annals*) reports, Yulgok had great talent for composing poetry and won literary fame from his childhood. He

and Wang Yangming were enshrined. For details, refer to Martina Deuchler, *Reject the False and Uphold the Straight: Attitudes toward Heterodox Thought in Early Yi Korea*, in W.T. de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush ed., *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 375-410, Esp. pp. 399-402.

⁵⁸ The purges took place in the years of *Muoh* (*Muoh sahwa* 戊午士禍, 1498), *Kapja* (*Kapja sahwa* 甲子士禍, 1504), *Ki'myo* (*Ki'myo sa'hwa* 己卯士禍, 1519), and *Yeulsa* (*Yeulsa sa'hwa* 乙巳士禍, 1545). Particularly the *Kimyo* purge resulted in the destructive situation where the community compact (*hyangyak* 鄉約 [Chi. *xiangyue*]) came to a stop and the elementary learning (*sohak* 小學 [Chi. *xiaoxue*]) was virtually banned as the community compact and the Small Learning were regarded as the basis of the social influence of the purged Neo-Confucian scholars and their like-minded colleagues.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*; *KTYJ* (IV), p. 38.

⁶⁰ "Today's scholars have the [following] shortcomings; first, they are indulged in literary composition (*wenzhang* 文章); second, they are obsessed with philology; and third, they are deluded by heresies." (今之學者有弊, 一溺於文章, 二牽於訓詁, 三惑於異端.) ("Yichuan xiansheng yu si" 伊川先生語 4, *Ercheng yishu* 二程遺書, *juan* 18; *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 187.) These words of Yuchuan are usually regarded as the Song Confucian criticism on the Han and Tang learning (*hantang ruxue* 漢唐儒學) that thought highly of composing poem and annotative study on the classics rather than cultivating ethical mind and appreciating the philosophical meaning of the classics. Also, the Han and Tang Confucians interacted freely with Buddhism and Daoism. In fact, the family background of Yulgok – a historic, distinguished scholar-official family – was the Han-Tang trend rather than the Song trend.

was also famous for his erudition, which included Buddhist and Daoist texts. The extant poems from his childhood testify to this record.⁶¹

In a letter to Yulgok after the two-day long encounter, Toegye again praised the potential of Yulgok as a student of the right way (*jeongro* 正路 [Chi. *zhenglu*]), or the learning of the Way (*dohak* 道學 [Chi. *daoxue*]). But the second poem included in the letter highlights Yulgok's past career:

You have come back from your long drift, lamenting it;	歸來自嘆久迷方,
In quietude, you must have caught a glimpse of light.	靜處才窺隙裏光,
I advise you to follow the right track without delay;	勸子及時追正軌,
Don't regret having set your foot in an impoverished village.	莫嗟行腳入窮鄉. ⁶²

The journey metaphor here (“Your long drift” and “having set your foot in an impoverished village”) should refer to Yulgok's study of Buddhism in the Keumkang Mount (*Keumkang san* 金剛山) for around one and a half years (1554-1555). Although Toegye said that Yulgok lamented his past, it is not so clear whether or not Yulgok in fact regretted it as seriously as the poem says, as will be discussed below. An article in the *Annals* reports an incident that happened to Yulgok (1558) after his stay in the mountains:

When Yulgok was about to take the special (occasional) civil service examination conducted by the King (*Ahlseong kwa* 謁聖科⁶³), all the cadets of the Royal academy, Seongkyunkwan suspected Yulgok to have entered Buddhist priesthood, and they held Yulgok from entering the Confucius shrine. Although their censure was so scathing, Yulgok kept his composure, with no change in his countenance.

⁶¹ 30th Aug., 1564, *Myeongjong shilrok* 明宗實錄, *kwon* 30; 18th Nov., 1565, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 31, The Annals (Veritable Record) of the Joseon Dynasty. I use two online sources: *Joseon wangjo shilrok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (From the online edition of Kuksa pyeonchan wiwonhoe 國史編纂委員會, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>); *Kuk'yeok Joseon wangjo shilrok* 國譯 朝鮮王朝實錄 (From the online edition of Korean translation by Minjok munhwa chujinhoe 民族文化追進會, <http://www.minchu.or.kr>) And refer to the poems and writings written in his childhood. *CWYG*, *kwon* 1 and the complementary annex (Seup'yu 拾遺) of *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I).

⁶² Seo 書 (Collection of Letters) (1), *CWYG*, *kwon* 9; *KTYJ* (IV), p. 39.

⁶³ This irregular recruitment examination was presided over by the King after he worshipped the shrine of Confucius (*munmyo* 文廟 [Chi. *wenmiao*] or *seongmyo* 聖廟 [Chi. *shengmiao*]).

將謁聖, 泮中諸生以出家爲嫌, 不使入廟庭. 群論崢嶸, 而怡然不變.⁶⁴

Yulgok's reaction needs an explanation. I do not believe that it can be understood simply as putting up a brave front against a hostile crowd. More importantly, if he had been filled with just remorse for having engaged in Buddhism, he would not have shown such an attitude. In other words, he might have regarded the interaction with Buddhism as part of his learning of Confucianism. This differs from the usual understanding of Yulgok's relationship with Buddhism; that is, Yulgok entered the Buddhist priesthood due to the family problems and his indulgence in Buddhism, and he came back to the world and Confucianism after he realized the futility of Buddhism as will be explained below.⁶⁵

However, in this section, I will argue that at present, we cannot conclude that Yulgok regretted his choice in learning Buddhism, and that there is a need to take into consideration the socio-political condition at the time in understanding Yulgok's conversation with Toegyue.⁶⁶ My suggestion is that Yulgok could have maintained a non-partisan open-minded attitude in his learning i.e., he might have thought that Buddhist practice was not necessarily contrary to his belief in Confucianism. (Indeed, in the next section, I will argue, in detail, that Yulgok's open-mindedness toward learning applies not only to Buddhism but also to his open-minded attitudes toward other teachings.)

⁶⁴ 24th March, 1566, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 32, *ibid.*

⁶⁵ This general understanding of Yulgok and Buddhism seems to be caused by a retrospective and reductive interpretation; that is, the aged Yulgok told the King and disciples that he earlier dabbled in Buddhist practice in hopes of a prompt effect but realized the futility of Buddhism and the practicality of Confucianism. See 24th June, 1575, *Seonjo sujeong shilrok* 宣祖修正實錄 (the revised edition of *Seonjo shilrok*) *kwon* 9, *ibid.*; Kim Jang-Seng 金長生, "Yulgok Haenjang 栗谷行狀", Appendix 3, *CWYG*, *kwon* 35; *KTYJ* (VII), pp. 153-154.

⁶⁶ And, further, aged Yulgok's talk with the King and disciples can be understood in the same context. 24th June, 1575, *ibid.*; Kim Jang-Seng, *ibid.*

According to Yulgok's biography, the *haengjang* 行狀 written by his disciple, Kim Jang-Seng 金長生 (1548-1631, styled Sakye 沙溪)⁶⁷ and the *Annals*, Yulgok's decision to stay in the Keumkang Mountain is ostensibly due to three reasons:

- 1) To ease the pain over the death of his mother, Shin Sayimdang 申 師任堂 (1504-51)⁶⁸ and to pray for her;⁶⁹
- 2) Before he left for the Mountain, he had told his friends that he wanted to nourish and control the vital energy, *qi* 氣 as Mencius did,⁷⁰ and that staying in the Mountain for nourishing *qi* could be justified by a saying of Confucius, "People of wisdom enjoy water; people of humanity enjoy the mountains." (*Analects* 6:21, "Zhizhe reshui renzhe reshan 知者樂水; 仁者樂山");⁷¹
- 3) The *Annals* also mentions the disharmony between Yulgok and his father's concubine (Yulgok's stepmother) who took over the responsibility of the household affairs.⁷²

Most scholars share the common understanding that Yulgok indulged in Buddhism and rejected it later, returning to the world and Confucianism. However, this interpretation will not be able to explain readily Yulgok's brave reaction to others' complaints, as quoted above, about his engagement with Buddhism and his Confucian reasons for going to Mount Keumkang. If Yulgok had decided to go to the Mountain because of his mother's death, which may be seen as an expression of filial piety, *hyo* 孝 (Chi. *xiao*), and to nourish *qi* in the context

⁶⁷ *Yulgok Haenjang* 行狀, Appendix 3, *CWYG*, *kwon* 35; *KTYJ* (VII), pp. 151-216.

⁶⁸ This is originally the name of her building. Since the women of the Joseon did not usually have first names, it has been used as if it was a name. The meaning is 'to emulate Taeyim 太任 [Chi. Tairen], the mother of the King *Wen* of the Zhou (*Zhou wenwang* 周文王).' She was the first teacher of Yulgok and a famous female writer, calligrapher, and painter.

⁶⁹ *Yulgok Haenjang*, *ibid.*; 24th March, 1566, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 32, *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Yi Jong-Ho holds that *qi* in this context should be *hoyeon ji ki* 浩然之氣 (Chi. *haoran zhi qi*: flood-like *qi*), which Yulgok later calls the original *qi* (*bonyeon ji ki* 本然之氣 [Chi. *benran zhi qi*] or *wonki* 元氣 [Chi. *yuanqi*]). Yulgok, *Yinkan-kwa sasang* (Seoul: Jishik saneopsa, 1994), p. 40. Also refer to the *Mencius* 2A:2.

⁷¹ *Yulgok Haenjang*, *ibid.*; *KTYJ* (VII), pp. 152-153.

⁷² 24th March, 1566, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 32, *ibid.* As to the third, there seems to be different views. Refer to Appendix I.

of Confucianism,⁷³ he would not have deeply regretted it, as Toegye's poem insinuates.⁷⁴ Unless we are skeptical of the two reasons, the idea that Yulgok regretted his encounter with Buddhism seems simplistic. If this is the case, we may think that Yulgok's decision to stay in the mount was not a matter of choice between Confucianism and Buddhism and that Yulgok's conversation with Toegye can be differently understood. As we shall see presently, there are other related records – poems and other writings written by Yulgok himself (which will be shown both in this and the next section) – that would support an alternative reading of Yulgok's relationship with Buddhism.

How do we understand Yulgok's conversation with Toegye and his relationship with Buddhism, then? There are two aspects to be considered in answering this question: first, the socio-political situation covering the period of Yulgok's stay in the mountain and the encounter with Toegye; second, Yulgok's poems written during the period in question that suggest his spiritual and open-minded attitude toward learning. These two aspects are discussed in turn below.

⁷³ Edward Chung holds that Yulgok's interest in Buddhism to this effect is serious in both intellectual and spiritual contexts. Edward Y.G. Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi T'oegye and Yi Yulgok – A Reappraisal of the Four-Seven Thesis and Its practical Implications for Self-Cultivation* (Albany: SUNY, 1995), pp. 27-28.

⁷⁴ At this point, we need to re-appreciate the first and the second reasons, which can be considered to be the important motives in terms of both the usual sense of emotion and philosophical spirituality. When the two reasons are examined in conjunction with Yulgok's conversation with Toegye, a sort of inconsistency can be inferred; if Yulgok decided to stay in the mountain to relieve his sorrow, i.e. to pray for the dead (filial piety) and to nourish *qi* in the context of Confucianism as the records mentioned, he could not have deeply regretted, as described in Toegye's poem. And even if his appreciation of the value of the practice of meditation practice in seclusion and prayer for the deceased might have become weakened after the real experience, our conclusion would be the same. Edward Chung points out the "second turning point" of Yulgok during his stay in Seoul after coming down from the mountain (1556) that Yulgok was uncertain between Buddhism and Confucianism; Yulgok eventually decided to revert to Confucianism, though. However, Chung does not explain why Yulgok came back to the secular world and stayed in Seoul. Moreover, Chung's understanding seems contradictory to Yulgok's initial reasons for staying in the mountain. Refer to Chung, *ibid.*

At the time when Yulgok went to Mount Keumkang, Buddhism under the leadership of the monk Bowu 普雨 (1515-1565) collaborated with the hegemonic, corrupt group which controlled the King and purged many Neo-Confucians (1545).⁷⁵ Confucians were no doubt indignant over the corrupt hegemony and saw Buddhism as the evil heresy of the time;⁷⁶ as such, Yulgok's dabbling in Buddhism would not be viewed favourably by the community of Confucians (*sarim* 士林), regardless of his sincere belief in Confucianism.⁷⁷ In this context, the

⁷⁵ A Chan monk, Bowu gained the great confidence of Munjeong wanghu 文定王候 (the consort of the former King *Jung* (*Jungjong* 中宗)). Bowu re-established the Buddhist system of the Joseon that had stayed destroyed until 1550. Munjeong wanghu became a regent of the 12-year old King *Myeong* (*Myeongjong* 明宗) (1548). Thanks to her regency, her younger brother, Yun Won-Hyeong 尹元衡 gained the hegemony in the court and purged the political rivals including many Confucian-officials by the Yeulsa 乙巳 (1545) literati purge and the concoctive Beokseo 壁書 (anti-government poster) incident in the Yangjae village. Bowu could get close to Munjeong wanghu thanks to the secondary wife of Yun Won-Hyeong. The short revival and prosperity of Buddhism in the Joseon ended when the regent Munjeong wanghu died in 1565.

⁷⁶ When the administrative system of Buddhism was re-established and approved by the government (1550), Confucians all over Joseon Korea filed more than 400 petitions against Buddhism. Refer to *Myeongjong shilrok*, *ibid*.

⁷⁷ This does not necessarily mean that the Joseon academic arena was nothing but a religious dogmatization of the Cheng-Zhu school. As John B. Duncan points out, the habitual definition of the Joseon Confucianism as “more narrow and dogmatic” orthodoxy is problematic in that the civil service examination of the Joseon gave priority to the section of belle-lettres (composing poem) – admixture of the Tang and the Song style, different from the Song, Ming and Qing styles. In the beginning of the dynasty, there might have been various power-literati with various intellectual backgrounds; later, there might have been tension between the state version of (adulterated) orthodoxy and a pure Cheng-Zhu learning of the rusticated literati. (Refer to his Examination and Orthodoxy in Chosŏn Dynasty Korea, *Rethinking Confucianism: past and present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam* (LA: UCLA, 2002), pp. 95-115.) Nevertheless, what I mean in the above is that due to the rise of political factionalism in 16th century, this stigmatization of fellow Confucians as heretics did have its own valid effect, and that Neo-Confucians' cliché about orthodoxy and the strong hostility against heresies need to be appreciated not as just a fuss by modern scholars but as a counterevidence of the incomplete dominance of Neo-Confucianism in daily and spiritual life at the time. Labeling someone a heretic could have had a significant effect among Confucian literati because of the anxiety about the incomplete dominance as well as the political infighting.

support of Toegye, who exerted utmost influence on the community of Confucians,⁷⁸ may have been of immense significance to Yulgok. Accordingly, Yulgok's talk with Toegye about his studying Buddhism might be interpreted as reflecting the socio-political context, and specifically as an attempt to distance Yulgok from the Buddhist-hegemonic group. In fact, after his audience with Toegye (1558), Yulgok passed the special (occasional) civil service examination conducted by the King (*Ahlseong kwa*) at the first rank.⁷⁹ As mentioned, Yulgok was prevented by the students of the Seongkyunkwan from entering the Confucius shrine and taking the examination. In fact, Yulgok would not have taken the examination had it not been for the intervention of a hegemonic minister, Shim Tong-Won 沈通源 (1499-?).⁸⁰ Shim Tong-Won was the uncle of Shim Ui-Kyeom 沈義謙 (1535-1587), who was a disciple of Toegye and a strong patron of Yulgok at the very beginning of his career as a higher official. Given that Yulgok's stay in Keumkang Mountain had been criticized repeatedly,⁸¹ without Toegye's support,⁸² he would have had to face far greater impediment to his career. Of course,

⁷⁸ 15th Feb., 1566, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *ibid.* According to this article, all Confucians (Kor. *sarim*) admired Toegye for his great scholarship and noble personality (*jongju* 宗主 [Chi. *zongzhu*], *taesan bukdu* 泰山北斗 [Chi. *taishan beidou*], *bonghwang* 鳳凰 [Chi. *fenghuang*]); interestingly, the article reports, even a petty scholar in a remote village was under his influence.

⁷⁹ Yulgok's career as a higher official began in 1564 after he passed the highest service examination (*dae kwa* 大科).

⁸⁰ From Song Eung-Kyeong 宋應漑 and Yi Ju's 李澍 impeachment of Yulgok (16th and 17th July, 1583, *Seonjo shilrok* 宣祖實錄, *kwon* 17, *ibid.*)

⁸¹ 30th August, 1564, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 30, *ibid.*; 24th March, 1566, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 32, *ibid.* Also, refer to Song Eung-Kyeong's 宋應漑 impeachment of Yulgok (16th July, 1583, *Seonjo shilrok*, *kwon* 17, *ibid.*)

⁸² Refer to Yulgok's four letters to Toegye. Seo 書 (Collection of Letters)(1), *CWYG*, *kwon* 9; *PTYJ* (III), pp. 1-18. In these four letters, Yulgok shows a great respect to Toegye as both an elder scholar and experienced official; however, I could not find out Yulgok's regret about his stay in the mountain. Reportedly, the very first letter has been lost, and it contained Yulgok's remorse about his dabbling in Buddhism. This conjecture has been made based on Toegye's extant reply letter, in which Toegye's reply poem that we have just discussed was contained. Even if this could be true, it does not bother my argument because the lost first letter can be regarded as just covering the very first moment of their encounter and

I do not mean to suggest that Yulgok indicated to Toegye that he regretted his foray into Buddhism just to score political points. Rather, my suggestion is that the socio-political effect of Yulgok's visit to Toegye needs to be considered because it was unignorable in Yulgok's social life.

Now we move on to Yulgok's writings written around the period in question, which might provide the more fundamental reason for Yulgok's learning Buddhism and his mental composure in such a daunting situation at the special examination (*Alseong kwa*). As is presently shown below and in the next section, Yulgok's writings reveal that his dabbling in Buddhism cannot be a matter of choice between Confucianism and Buddhism, and, further, it may indicate an implicit syncretism and fundamentalism that lay emphasis on the ultimate purpose – fundamentals – of learning, rather than the school titles of learning.⁸³ When Yulgok took the road to the mountain, he said:

Heaven and Earth – who created them?
 Sun and Moon – who polished them out?
 Mountains and Rivers already solidified and melted;
 Cold and Heat take turns.
 We Humans are among all kinds;
 Our knowledge is most immense.
 How can we be like gourds,
 Dangling lonesomely around in the place?
 Throughout the world we can ramble,
 What is there to stop us from easy wandering?
 Mountains in the spring a thousand miles away,
 With a cane I am going there.
 Alas, who will be following me!

乾坤孰開闢，
 日月誰磨洗，
 山河既融結，
 寒暑更相遞，
 吾人處萬類，
 知識最爲巨，
 胡爲類匏瓜，
 戚戚迷處所，
 八荒九州間，
 優游何所阻，
 春山千里外，
 策杖吾將去，
 伊誰從我者，

conversation that we have already discussed. Rather, noteworthy is that the left four letters do not include Yulgok's regret about Buddhism and even cliché criticism on Buddhism.

⁸³ Besides, Yulgok's hospitality to Buddhism needs to be regarded as concerned with a long-term family background, rather than a fundamental change in faith; as Song Si-Yeol 宋時烈 (1607-89, styled Wuam 尤菴) and the *Annals* say, Yulgok had read and enjoyed one of the (*Shou*) *Lengyan jing* (首) 楞嚴經 (*Śūraṅgama Sūtra*), the most important scriptures in Chan (Zen) Buddhism, since childhood under the influence of his father, Yi Won-Soo 李元秀. This may suggest that in Yulgok's mind, Confucianism and Buddhism could co-exist without conflicting with each other. Refer to the article of 24th March, 1566, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 32, *ibid.*; *Songja daejeon* 宋子大全, *kwon* 19; Yi Jong-Ho, *ibid.*, pp. 37-50.

At sunset I in vain stand waiting for him.

薄暮空延佇。⁸⁴

And there is another noteworthy poem, whose exact composition year is not yet known. However, the content seems to describe Yulgok's earlier history pertaining to learning and family affairs and his present stay in the mount:

Alas, I was born with suffering in this degenerate age,
And have been busy chasing worldly interests from childhood.
My eyes went through the [Confucian] classics,
And my will admired the sagely rulers.
However, innumerable affairs got into uncountable tangles,
And so nowhere could I relax my mind.
All of sudden I escaped through the gate of the capital,
And my steps led me eventually to a remote seashore.
Wind and moon nourish my emotion,
and mist and glow in the sky fill my body.
Zizhang (Sima Qian 司馬遷) is the person whom I admire,
And Yeolkyeong (Kim Shi-Seup 金時習) is my favorite.
I do not look for pleasure from mountains and waters,
But just want to perfect my true nature by them.
Things and I are merged into one body –
Who is the subject, and who is the object?
It is as limpid as a clean lake;
It is as still as the autumn sky.
There is no worry, nor is there pleasure;
This realm is difficult for people to reach.
Mysterious truth (*li*) is unfathomable;
It can be neither stained nor worn for ever.
Clamorous people in the street
Point at me as a moron.
Who will hear me out in the world?
The bright moon is my only audience.
I whistle a good tune for a while;
The sky and earth calmly watch spring.

嗟余生苦晚,
少小趨埃塵。
眼閱古缺書,
志慕義皇人。
世累紛萬緒,
無處怡精神。
飄然出國門,
足跡窮海濱。
風月養我情,
煙霞盈我身。
子長吾所慕,
悅卿吾所親。
非探山水興,
聊以全吾真。
物我合一體,
誰主誰為賓?
湛湛若澄潭,
肅肅如秋旻。
無憂亦無喜,
此境人難臻。
妙理不可測,
百歲無緇磷。
擾擾路中子,
指我為愚民。
四顧孰知音,
明月為雷陳。
浩歌一長嘯,
悠悠天地春。⁸⁵

If we assume that the above poem was written around 1554, this poem can be regarded as Yulgok recalling the near past and describing the present in Mount Keumkang. (The mount is close to a port city, Kangreung 江陵 where Yulgok's maternal family lived and he was brought up.)

⁸⁴ “Chul dongmun” 出東門 (1554), *Shi* 詩 (Poem), *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I), p. 56.

⁸⁵ “Wu'eum” 偶吟 (Casual reciting), Seup'yu 拾遺 (The complementary annex) of *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I), p. 236.

Interestingly, this poem mentions Sima Qian (B.C. 145-85) and Kim Shi-Seup; Sima Qian was a great historian whose thought was more or less Daoist syncretism or eclecticism; Kim Shi-Seup (1435-1493) was really an eccentric figure – he traversed all the three teachings, and eventually became a monk. (This will be explained again in the next section.) In the flow of the poem, we see that Yulgok holds these figures and his wandering with the Confucian search for the truth – Principle (*li*), heart-mind (*xin*), and nature (*xing*). In other words, Yulgok is not worried about what to choose for his learning. Rather, he reaches beyond the domain of Confucianism through the territory of Daoism and Buddhism, only to expand the Confucian domain. These points may constitute an implicit syncretism or a radicalism (radical-ism; root-ism; fundamental-ism, an idea going to the root, rather than to the extreme), which can be detected more clearly in the case of the *Sun-Eon*. However, this attitude of Yulgok seems to have not been fully understood by others. This is implicated in the line, “clamorous people in the street point at me as a moron,” which may remind us of the *Laozi* (Ch. 20). The next poem (1555) seems to bolster our reading:

Learning the Way means no-attachment;	學道即無著,
Opportunities lead me to excursion anywhere.	隨緣到處遊,
Leaving the Chenghak village for a while;	暫辭青鶴洞,
I have come to enjoy myself in the Baekgu ju.	來玩白鷗洲,
My lot is like a cloud floating a thousand miles;	身世雲千里,
Staying at the corner of the sea of cosmos.	乾坤海一頭,
In a thatched cottage I ask for a night;	草堂聊奇宿,
Plum blossoms and moon in the yard are of refinement.	梅月是風流. ⁸⁶

At this point, the pertinent question to ask is: What and how was Yulgok’s attitude toward the so-called heresies that ranged from non-orthodox Confucianism (the philosophy of Lu Xiangshan xue 陸象山 and Wang Yangming 王陽明) to Buddhism and Daoism? Although Yulgok was also a strong proponent of the Cheng-Zhu school, whose last and official

⁸⁶ “Yeo sanyin bo’eung hasan jipung’eom yikwangmun ji wonka sukchodang” 與山人普應下山至豐巖李廣文之元家宿草堂 (Bo’eung and I have come down from the mount, visited Yi Kwang-Mun’s home, and stayed in the thatched cottage, 1555), Shi 1, *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I), pp. 63-64.

conclusion about the other teachings is supposed to be the cliché i.e., ‘heterodox, bad and inferior,’ his attitude and intermediate thinking process before the cliché conclusion may provide us with a good source by which to consider Yulgok to be an individual thinker. It seems that he wanted to, in his Confucian position, embrace other teachings rather than rule them out. This appears to be, as will be discussed, supported by the articles of the *Annals*, the conversation with a Seon/Chan monk, and his criticism of Neo-Confucians of the Joseon.

2. Yulgok's attitude toward learning: Outreach and Openness from within

According to the *Annals*, one of the famous words to describe Yulgok was “In the previous life, he must have been Kim Shi-Seup 金時習; in the present life, he has become Jiadao 賈島 (Kor. Kado)”⁸⁷ Kim Shi-Seup (1435-93, styled Maewoldang 梅月堂) was a famous Joseon Korean writer who had traversed Confucianism, Daoism,⁸⁸ and eventually Buddhism. Ironically, despite his strong Confucian sentiment, he became a Chan monk because he was disappointed with the usurpation of King Dan's 端 throne by the uncle, Suyang daekun 首陽大君. Jiadao 賈島 (792-865, styled Langxian 浪仙) was a famous monk poet of the Tang, but after he met Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824, styled Tuizhi 退之), he disrobed and returned to the world, serving the government as an official. This poem, regardless of Yulgok's

⁸⁷ “前身定是金時習; 今世仍爲賈浪仙.” (30th August, 1564, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 30, *ibid.*)

⁸⁸ Kim Shi-Seup has been enlisted as an important Daoist practitioner in the history of Korean Daoism. Such books as *Haedong jeondo rok* 海東傳道錄 (mid Joseon, Han Mu-Oe 韓無畏), *Haedong yijeok* 海東異蹟 (Joseon, Hong Man-Jong 洪萬宗), and *Cheonghak jip* 青鶴集 (late Joseon) mention Kim. Refer to Yi Neung-Hwa 李能和, *Joseon dokyo sa* 朝鮮道教史, Yi Jong-Eun 이종은 trans. and comment., (Seoul: Boseong muhwasa, 1977, manuscripted in approx. 1930) Also refer to Yulgok's *Kim Shi-Seup jeon* 金時習傳 (Biography of Kim Shi-Seup) *CWYG*, *kwon* 14; *PTYJ* (IV), pp. 10-18. This is the only available biography of Kim. Yulgok wrote this biography under orders of the King Seon (1st April, 1582, the Revised edition of *Seonjo shilrok*, *kwon* 16, *ibid.*)

self-consciousness, seems to describe a series of changes in Yulgok's life: stay in the mountain, and then scholar-official in the world.

Although this poem was not included in the complete works of Yulgok, and was criticized as being unreliable by some later scholars, it must have been regarded as authentic by his contemporaries, given that the *Annals* reported the poem in introducing Yulgok. The comparison between Yulgok and scholars close to Daoism such as Kim Shi-Seup was acceptable in the light of his spiritually noble fondness for nature seen in the Confucian *Analects* (11:25).⁸⁹ Another article about Yulgok appears to support this speculation, and indicates the understanding of Yulgok by contemporaries:

When grown up, he wandered in nature, composing poems and having the self-attainments (*jadeuk/zide* 自得) and a great aspiration.
及長遨遊山水, 肅詠自得, 有遠舉之志.⁹⁰

What is notable in the above is the reference to the “self-attainment” (*Mencius* 3A:5, 4B:14). This notion is of critical importance to understanding not only the above article but also Yulgok's attitude toward learning in general. (This will be shown below.) For the two Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi, self-attainment means “inward spontaneous enlightenment” (*ziran er dezhi yuji* 自然而得之於己, *buyan er zide* 不言而自得) and “self-attainment of/from one's self or nature” (*zide qixing* 自得其性, *dezhi yuji* 得之於己, *zide yuji* 自得於己).⁹¹ Whichever is taken as the definition of “*jadeuk/zide*,” the effect of self-attainment is spiritual

⁸⁹ D. C. Lau, *The Analects (Lunyü)* (Harmonsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1979), 11:26. I follow Zhu Xi edition's division that is more suitable for this study because Zhu's commentaries are frequently cited, and that is, I think, more faithful to the context of the original text. Also, in the case of the *Mencius*, I follow Zhu's edition for the same reason.

⁹⁰ 18th Nov., 1565, *Myeongjong shilrok*, kwon 31, *ibid*.

⁹¹ Zhu Xi, *Mengzi jizhu* 孟子集注, 3A:5; 4B:14; *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集注, 6:9; 7:8.

For a detailed explanation on the concept in Neo-Confucianism, see Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Learning for One's self – Essays on the individual in Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York, Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1991), esp. pp. 47-69, Ch.3 Getting It Oneself. He translates *zide* as “getting/finding it by/for oneself”; “it” can be either the Way (principle) or contentment (satisfaction, joy) according to given contexts.

poise and enjoyment of whatever is given, as Mencius and Cheng-Zhu suggest.⁹² Now it seems clear why the *Annals* juxtaposes Yulgok's unfettered wandering in nature and reciting of poems as well as his self-attainment. The effect of self-attainment is mental easiness and enjoyment no matter what situation one is in.⁹³ This may carry Daoist flavor, i.e., fondness for nature and poetic romanticism ("I freely ramble in the world, and my mind is satisfied (*zide*)" (*Zhuangzi* 28:1)),⁹⁴ which is nonetheless compatible with *Analects* 11:25.

In addition to the general Neo-Confucian interpretation of *jadeuk/zide*, for Yulgok *jadeuk/zide* also means "one's unique insight through deep reflection" (*changkyeon cheo* 創見處 [originality], *jadeuk ji mi* 自得之味 [taste of self-attainment]). When Yulgok reviewed the scholars before him, he always took '*jadeuk/zide*' as the criterion of assessment; when the issue of posthumous conferment of honors to Seo Kyeong-Deok (1489-1546, styled Hwadam 花潭) was discussed in the court, Yulgok said:

"The learning of Seo Kyeong-Deok is not that which we scholars have to emulate. Seo's learning is generally [said to] originate from Zhang Hengqu. However, I do not know whether or not his learning is exactly compatible with the meaning of the Sages. However, Many people called 'scholars' just imitate and repeat the teachings of the Sages, but they do not have what is gained from their mind. [But] Seo has profound thought and unique achievement, [and so, his teaching] has so much profundity due to the acquirement from within (*jadeuk/zide*); it is not a bookish learning (the learning of

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Mencius* 4B:14; *Menzi jizhu* 2A:9, 4B:14, 5A:7, 7A:9, 7A:13.

⁹⁴ "逍遙於天地之間而心意自得." (Jiao Hong 焦竑, 莊子翼 *Zhuangzi yi* (Kanbun taigei 漢文大系 9, Toyamahusa, 1984) *juan* 9, p. 11.) The term, *zide* is also very important in the *Zhuangzi* and Guo Xiang 郭象 (252?-312)'s commentary on it. In the *Zhuangzi*, the term is used 8 times, and it is mostly used together with '*bu* 不' (*buzide*). According to the contexts, *zide* can be understood as complacency, composure, attainment, enlightenment, etc. Accordingly, the basic meaning of *zide* in the *Zhuangzi* seems similar as that in the *Mencius*. Moreover, in terms of its relationship with the Way (*Dao*), nature (*xing*), and virtue (*de*), *zide* in the *Zhuangzi* appears to be close to that in Neo-Confucianism as well. However, in the case of Guo Xiang's commentary, the meaning of *zide* seems tinged with his unique philosophical color; in order to suggest his philosophical concept, "self(lone)-transformation (*duhua* 獨化)," Guo seems to try to dissolve the connection between *zide* and the Way that is seen in the *Zhuangzi*. (Refer to Guo's commentary on the *Zhuangzi* 6:1 (p. 13), 7:1 (p. 31), etc.) Ziporyn, to this effect, translates *zide* as "auto-attained and self-right." (Brook Ziporyn, *The Penumbra unbound* (Albany: SUNY, 2003), p. 41.)

pedantry).” His highness followed [Yulgok’s opinion], and ordered to confer a posthumous honors [on Seo Kyeong-Deok].

“此工夫, 非學者所當法. 其學蓋出於橫渠, 其所著, 若謂吻合聖賢則臣不知也. 但世之所謂學者, 多依倣聖賢之說, 中心多無所得. 敬德則深思獨詣, 多自得之妙, 非言語、文字之學也.” 上從之, 有是贈.⁹⁵

Seo Kyeong-Deok was obviously an eccentric scholar; he seemed to subscribe to Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism although he paid attention to Material force (*qi*) and actual things more than Principle (*li*), and he tried to keep his distance from bookish learning like Wang Yangming did.⁹⁶ Like Kim Shi-Seup, Seo is enlisted as an important figure in the history of Korean Daoism;⁹⁷ as such, he seems to have given people an impression of being a Daoist practitioner.⁹⁸ Thus, King Seon was quite suspicious of Seo’s learning, and so hesitated to confer a posthumous honor on Seo. However, as seen in the above discussion and elsewhere, Yulgok pays considerable respect to Seo for the reason that Seo’s learning contains profundity gained from his own thought, or ‘self-attainment’ which is more conducive to oneself and others’ learning than the meaningless echo of the books of famous masters is (*ui’yang ji mi* 依樣之味 [taste of imitation]).⁹⁹ For Yulgok, whether or not one’s opinion agrees with the

⁹⁵ 11th May, 1575, *Seonjo shilrok*, *kwon* 21; the revised edition, *kwon* 9, *ibid.*

⁹⁶ When Seo pondered on each thing’s principle, he was not fed up with such tedious process of investigation of things (*gewu qionli* 格物窮理). Rather Seo was extremely happy with the process, confident of his gain, while Wang, as well known, professed that he fell in from stress without gaining anything from such activity.

⁹⁷ In *Haedong jeondo rok* 海東傳道錄, Seo Kyong-Deok is positioned next to Kim Shi-Seup in the genealogy of transmission of the Daoist Way. The reliability of this book is usually doubted. Nevertheless, in this book we can learn how the Joseon Daoist practitioners claim their identity – Daoist-Confucian identity.

⁹⁸ In the *Annals*, the article about Seo reports that even when he and his family ran out of grains so that they could not eat any meal for a day, he vigorously lectured his disciples with composure. If a disciple, Kang Mun-Woo 姜文佑 had not brought rice and asked Seo’s family about food, they would not have known the situation. (1575, *Seonjo shilrok*, *ibid.*, *kwon* 21.) This article implicitly compares Seo to the best disciple of Confucius, Yan Hui 顏回, whose spirituality is often compared to Daoist spirituality. Refer to *Confucius Analects* 6:9.

⁹⁹ “Dap Seong Ho-Won” 答成浩原 6, Seo (2), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), pp. 94-95. In this letter, Yulgok criticizes Toegye as a scholar of *uiyang ji mi*, not *jadek/zide*.

Cheng-Zhu school is a superficial matter. If one's points are drawn from deeper reflection, though they may differ from that of the established Cheng-Zhu learning, they should be helpful to understanding Principle (*li*), Material force (*qi*), Heart-mind (*xin*) and Nature (*xing*), the fundamental concepts of Confucian philosophy.

The next issue is how Yulgok's stance about learning is reflected in his attitude toward Buddhism and Lu-Wang's learning. In the following two analyses, I will highlight the fact that Yulgok's emphasis on '*jadeuk/zide*' throughout his lifetime effectively works in the form of 'learning extending from self, and again recurring to self,' and can be said to be the circulation between introspection and extension. His attitude toward learning in general turns out to be a radical re-awareness of the original motive of learning, which makes possible outreach/openness toward other teachings as well as a reaffirmation of Neo-Confucianism and demand for sincerity in learning.

The following exchange between Yulgok and an anonymous monk represents his attitude toward Confucianism and Buddhism.¹⁰⁰

A) I hung around in the Keumkang Mountain [before]. One day I strolled by myself in a ravine, and when I walked a few miles there, I met a small Buddhist hermitage. There was an old monk wearing a sangha robe and sitting square [i.e., in meditation]. He saw me, but he did not stand up or uttered a single word. I looked around the hermitage, but I could not see any other things [for daily life]. The kitchen did not have fire to cook food by; nevertheless, he kept his composure. I asked him, "What are you doing here?" The monk smiled but did not answer. I asked again, "What do you eat to appease your hunger?" He pointed to the leaves of a pine tree, saying, "This is my food." I felt like trying to argue with him.

¹⁰⁰ Han Hyeong-Jo showed a detailed analysis of this paragraph in his article. (refer to Han Hyeong-Jo 한형조, Yulgok sasang-ui yuhakjeok haeseok 율곡사상의 유학적 해석, *Yulgok sasang-kwa keu hyeondae-jeok ui 'mi* 栗谷의 사상과 그 현대적 의미 (Seongnam: Academy of Korean Studies, 1995), pp. 197-303. Esp. pp. 218-246.) Han interprets this paragraph as Yulgok's turning point from Buddhism to Confucianism. Han follows the assumption that Yulgok became a Buddhist monk and returned to Confucianism and the world; therefore, this episode, Han asserts, 'dramatically' shows Yulgok's entering and quitting Buddhist monkhood although it shows that Yulgok deeply understands Buddhism. As will be discussed, I believe that this episode shows neither so-called 'the turning point' nor 'overcoming Buddhism.'

余之游楓嶽也。一日獨步深洞中數里許得一小菴。有老僧被袈裟正坐，見我不起，亦無一語。周視菴中，了無他物，廚不炊爨，亦有日矣。余問曰，在此何爲？僧笑而不答。又問，食何物以療飢。僧指松曰，此我糧也。余欲試其辯。

B) I asked him, “Which one is the sage, Confucius or the Buddha?” He said, “Dear gentleman, do not play a joke on me, please.” “Buddhism is the teaching of barbarians, and so it should not be taught in China,” I said. The monk said, “Shun 舜 was an eastern barbarian; the King Wen 文 was a western barbarian. Are their teachings all those of barbarians [that should be banned], then?”

問曰，孔子釋迦孰爲聖人？僧曰，措大莫瞞老僧。余曰，浮屠是夷狄之教，不可施於中國。僧曰，舜，東夷之人也。文王，西夷之人也。此亦夷狄耶？

C) “The exquisite points of Buddhism are not different from those of our Confucianism. Why do we have to abandon Confucianism, seeking Buddhism?” I asked. The monk said, “Does Confucianism also have such words as ‘Heart-Mind is Buddha’?” I replied, “Mencius maintained ‘Human nature is good,’ and he was always talking about the ancient Sagely Kings, Yao 堯 and Shun 舜. How is this different from the words ‘Heart-Mind is Buddha’? However, [the difference between the two is that] we Confucians gain practicality.”

余曰，佛家妙處，不出吾儒，何必棄儒求釋乎？僧曰，儒家亦有卽心卽佛之語乎？余曰，孟子道性善，言必稱堯舜，何異於卽心卽佛？但吾儒見得實。

D) The monk did not accept it. After a while, he then asked, “How about such words as ‘Neither being (*se* 色, *rūpa*) nor non-being (*kong* 空, *śūnyatā*)?” “It should be also just about an object of our perception (*jin/jing* 境 = *jin/chen* 塵, *viśaya*),” I said. He laughed at it. I asked, “A kite flies in the sky; a fish springs up out of water (*yeonbi yeocheon*; *eo’yak wuyeon* 鳶飛戾天; 魚躍于淵 [Chi. *yanfei litian*; *yuyue yuyan*]).’ Is this about being or non-being?” He replied, “Neither being nor non-being. It is the substance (*che/ti* 體) of reality (*jinyeo/zhenru* 真如, *tathatā*). How can this poem be comparable [to the substance]?” I laughed and said, “Once you utter a single word, the realms (the extrinsic division of subject/object, this/that, phenomenon/noumenon through *bunbeoylji/fenbiezhi* 分別知, *vikālpā*) take place. Why do you say of the substance (*che/ti*)? If your words are right, then I would rather say that the exquisite points of Confucianism cannot be transmitted by words; the Way of Buddhism is confined in words.” He was surprised at my words, and he gripped my hands, saying, “You are not a worldly Confucian. For me, please, compose a poem to explain the phrase of the kite and fish.” I immediately composed a poem.

僧不肯，良久乃曰，非色非空，何等語也。余曰，此亦前境也。僧哂之。余乃曰，鳶飛戾天；魚躍于淵。此則色耶空耶？僧曰，非色非空，是真如體也，豈此詩之足比！余笑曰，既有言說，便是境界，何謂體也？若然則儒家妙處，不可言傳，而佛氏之道，不在文字外也。僧愕然，執我手曰，子非俗儒也。爲我賦詩，以釋鳶魚之句。余乃書一絕。

E) The monk read and tucked it in the sleeve of his robe, turning his body to the wall [for meditation again]. Then I came out of the ravine. I was stupefied and unable to understand what kind of person he was. Three days later, I went to the place again. The hermitage was still the same, but the monk had already disappeared.

僧覽後收入袖中，轉身向壁。余亦出洞，恍然不知其何如人也。後三日再往，則小菴依舊。僧已去矣。

(My paragraphing and underlining)

*A fish's springing up and a kite's flying tells the accord of high and low
This kind of talk is not about being, and not about non-being, too.*

*I vacuously chuckled once, looking at my own lot
I am standing alone, at sunset in the middle of ten thousand trees.*
魚躍鳶飛上下同, 這般非色亦非空, 等閒一笑看身世, 獨立斜陽萬木中.¹⁰¹

The encounter may be described at one level as a debate which Yulgok won, but it could also be interpreted as a dialogue for educational purpose or the thinking process of one sincere scholar on the long history of interaction between Buddhism and Confucianism in China. Yulgok himself seems to convey this complexity in saying in E) that he did not understand what kind of person the monk was, visiting the place again with curiosity. Going back to the beginning of the quotation, we need to carefully consider each point in each section:

A) Yulgok wonders how the monk could maintain his composure despite the fact that he did not possess anything for his daily needs; why does he live in that way?

B) Yulgok put forward the cliché criticism of Buddhism, i.e., the teaching of barbarians, which is instantly knocked down by the monk – ‘the most important criteria for the evaluation should be whether or not the teaching transmits the Way to deserve following.’ This radical point seems to be well received by Yulgok as he does not offer a rebuttal; rather, Yulgok seems to have learned from it. If Buddhism is a “self-attainment through deeper reflection” (*jadeuk/zide*), why should we not appreciate it? This point will be reiterated in his criticism of fellow Joseon Neo-Confucians.

C) Yulgok tries to subjugate Buddhism to Confucianism by identifying the points of Buddhism as a minor part of Confucianism. However, Yulgok’s points and the monk’s question provide us with important information about the intellectual circumstance of the time; the religious-philosophical agenda at the time revolved around the ‘inward’ as the core of self, i.e., the heart-mind (*xin*) and nature (*xing*) – ‘*jadeuk/zide*,’ where Chan Buddhism and

¹⁰¹ “Pung-ak: *jeung soam noseung byeongseo*” 楓嶽 贈小菴老僧 并序 (Presented to the old monk of a small hermitage with the introduction),’ Shi 1, *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I), pp. 58-59.

Neo-Confucianism interact with each other; the rediscovery and emphasis of the *Mencius* by Neo-Confucianism since the Song dynasty is, together with its cultural context, reflected in Yulgok's words. As a matter of fact, to Yulgok, the monk's words, 'Heart-mind is Buddha' was neither new nor eccentric:

On the top of Mount Ohdae is a tabernacle for Chan meditation;
The water from beneath a rock, channeled by bamboo, tastes sweet.
If he had already known this heart-mind is originally Buddha;
He would not have meditated without a stop on Mount Jade.
五臺山上有禪龕, 石底筍筒水味甘, 早識此心元是佛, 玉峯無竭不須參.¹⁰²

Hence, Yulgok's comparison of the Chan doctrine to the *Mencius* can be regarded as originated from his radical awareness of the deep identity of Neo-Confucianism and (Chan/Zen) Buddhist teachings – a strong faith in the wellspring of spirituality, Heart-mind;

D) The subsequent question of the monk is what the ultimate “inward” foundation of the world is in Confucianism and how it is reflected in the world. Yulgok's answer is provoking; every existence is a revelation of the truth, and every daily thing is the truth in itself; there is no gap between phenomenon and noumenon as espoused in (Mahayana and Chan) Buddhist teaching. When the monk tries to pin down Yulgok's answer by alluding to “the substance,” he is totally defeated by Yulgok. In fact, the word, ‘substance’ is contrary to the import of Buddhism (*muah/wuwo* 無我; no-substance; no-self; no-subject, and therefore no-others; no-object). The meaning of the quoted poem from the *Shijing* is clear, according to Yulgok. Perhaps, for Yulgok the phrase of the *Shijing* is the best alternative to ‘silence’; the scene of “A fish's springing up and a kite's flying” is silence itself as a whole although Yulgok had to verbally utter the phrase. Let us take a look at another poem by Yulgok:

The movement of ants and the fight between bulls are equally calm as if they are the same sound;

¹⁰² “Yuseung kushi cha toegyewun” 有僧求詩 次退溪韻 (A monk ask me for a poem, so I composed a poem by borrowing a rhyme from Toegye's poems), Shi 1, *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I), p. 113.

Who would know the abyss of silence where the earth quakes and the sea rages and thunders?

蟻動與牛鬪, 寥寥同一聲, 誰知淵默處, 殷地海濤轟.¹⁰³

Yulgok gave this poem to an old and deaf monk, whose world was ‘silent’; however, silence can be a blessing because when silence can be understood as the realm where all the artificial wisdom and words are vanished, the reality of the universe – the unity of phenomenon/noumenon and subject/object will emerge, and the truth would be roaring more than any other sounds. Indeed Yulgok goes on to tell the monk that the ultimate truth is ineffable also in the case of Confucianism although the monk fails to understand it. The monk detects the superiority of Yulgok instantly and concedes defeat.¹⁰⁴ However, this does not mean that the monk concedes the excellence of Confucians and Confucianism in general. For the monk, as has been already shown, the title and origin of learning is not important; therefore, he does not have any reason to reject Yulgok’s piercing point that traverses Confucianism and Buddhism. Accordingly, the monk says that Yulgok is not “a worldly Confucian.”

The poem in **E**) repeats this awareness of Yulgok; he eventually produces an understanding of Buddhism from his Confucian perspective – *jadeuk/zide*. (We will see how this perspective will function in his Neo-Confucian system later.) This episode of Yulgok clearly shows how *jadeuk/zide* as “learning from within” and “unique insight through deeper reflection” functions as ‘learning extending from and recurring to self (Confucian reflection on self)’ and ‘a circulation between introspection and extension,’ making possible openness and

¹⁰³ “Je noseung shichuk seungnoyi yirong” 題老僧詩軸 僧老而耳聾 (Titling an old monk’s scroll for poem – the monk is aged, and so he is almost deaf), Shi 1, *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I), p. 102.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, it is hard to say that the monk was not yet aware of this point. As far as the substance is not ‘a thing’ but the truth of ‘the way in which things happen and are’ to the monk, the concept of substance as noumenon is supposed to be eventually dismissed by itself. This was the commonsensical teaching of Seon/Chan Buddhism in Joseon Korea at the time. Accordingly, the subsequent attitude to Yulgok, of the monk – conceding defeat – may be understood as his generosity due to his appreciation and encouragement of Yulgok’s excellent quality.

flexibility toward other teachings. This attitude of *jadeuk/zide* as a reflection of within is, as I already mentioned, followed by his ethical reflection on the sincerity of fellow Confucians including both Lu-Wang scholars and Cheng-Zhu scholars:

a) Someone asked me, “The scholars in Ming China are tainted with Lu Jiuyan’s learning, but I have not yet heard of it in Joseon Korea. Doesn’t this mean that the morality of Joseon Korean is superior to that of China?”

或問, “中朝之士, 多染陸學, 而我國則未之聞也. 豈我國人心之正, 勝於中朝乎?”

b) I replied, “If we are not tainted with Lu Jiuyan’s learning and fully committed to Zhu Xi’s learning so that we are capable of knowledge and practice, then [we could be said to be] indeed better than China. However, if we indulge in the pursuit of profit, and [as a result] we abandon both Zhu and Lu’s learning, how would the comparison (‘superiority and inferiority’) be?

答曰, “不染陸學而專用功於朱學, 能知能踐, 則固勝於中朝矣. 若專攻利欲而朱陸之學兩廢, 則其優劣何如哉?”

c) I once lamented, ‘Rather, Chinese scholars have what to serve (*suoshi* 所事, what to be engaged in), and so they would not relax their minds. Accordingly, whether they serve Zhu’s learning or Lu’s learning, they never vainly waste time. Although the wrong way and the right way can be discerned, it would be better to follow whichever way at all than to eat one’s fill without anything to pay attention to all day long. In the territory of our country, neither Zhu nor Liu is studied, but there are many who are committed only to worldly customs. These people (would-be scholars) are the same as the commonplace workers, merchants, and servants. How can we expect to be superior to China? Isn’t it wrong [to wish so]? How does the word, ‘heresy’ refer necessarily to Buddhism, Daoism, Chan, and Lu Jiuyan? Anyone who does not follow the Way of the Former [Sage] Kings (*seonwang ji do/ xianwang zhi dao* 先王之道) but comply with his/her own desire is nothing but ‘heresy.’

余嘗嘆, “中朝之士, 猶有所事, 不肯放心, 故或朱或陸, 終不虛老. 邪正雖殊, 猶愈於飽食終日, 無所用心也. 我國之士, 不朱不陸, 專務俗習者多矣. 此如傭夫販奴, 何別以此求勝於中朝, 無乃左乎? 異端之言, 豈必佛老禪陸爲然乎? 世之非先王之道, 循一己之欲者, 莫非異端也.”¹⁰⁵

The above quotation (written in 1581), particularly a), describes the academic situation of Joseon Korea and Ming China at the time. As Martina Deuchler successfully shows,¹⁰⁶ Joseon Neo-Confucians at the time were indeed concerned about the Chinese academic trend, i.e., the rise of Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming’s learning, their enshrinement in the Confucius shrine, etc. When they realized that to argue with Chinese

¹⁰⁵ “Hakbutongbyeon bal” 學蔀通辨跋 (Postscript to the Joseon edition of *Xuefu tongbian*), *CWYG*, *kwon* 13; *KTYJ* (III), pp. 281-282.

¹⁰⁶ Martina Deuchler, *ibid.*

scholars and students was of no use, they were determined to build up an independent tradition of the right learning (*jeonghak* 正學 [Chi. *zhengxue*]) in the Joseon and regard them as the genuine successor of the Cheng-Zhu learning.¹⁰⁷ This is why the most acrimonious criticism against heterodoxy and heresy, *Xuebu tongbian* 學部通辨 (“Penetrating discernment from the barrier in learning” published in 1548) of Chen Jian 陳健 (1497-1567, styled *Qinglan* 清瀾) was re-published in Joseon Korea in 1573, with Yulgok writing a postscript to the publication.

However, for Yulgok the overall situation does not necessarily mean that the contents of *Xuebu tongbian* and its author are flawless; nor are the Joseon Confucians better in morality. Although not seen in the above quotation, Yulgok casts suspicion on this work because he thinks the *Xuebu tongbian* is verbose and contributes to factionalism for factionalism’s sake and its author is not reliable in both personality and scholarship.¹⁰⁸ And as seen in **b**), Yulgok warns fellow Confucians of the Joseon against the peril of having a sense of superiority, raising a fundamental question, ‘What is the Cheng-Zhu learning for?’, *prima facie*, to follow the Cheng-Zhu learning can be thought to be better than to follow the Lu-Wang learning; however, the names of learning (schools) cannot be the overarching concern; the point is whether or not the Confucian values that the Joseon Cheng-Zhu scholars claim are put into practice.

¹⁰⁷ Martina Deuchler, *ibid.* In this article, Deuchler introduces a couple of episodes about the Joseon Neo-Confucians’ conversation with the Ming’s officials and students who accepted Lu and Wang’s learning’s ascendancy as a given fact and described them as the leaders of Daoxue 道學 of the time without hesitation. Although the common knowledge, ‘Lu-Wang’s rise and ascendancy of the Ming times’ is suspected to be a modern scholarship’s fuss by such scholars as Kojima Tsuyoshi and Mizoguchi Yūzō, Chinese scholars at the time can be said to have been, more or less, influenced by Lu-Wang learning, apart from the problem of whether or not the Yangming school was stalwartly established on a parity with the Cheng-Zhu school. (For the problem of spread of the Yangming school at the time, refer to Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, et al., *Donggukdae dongyangsa yeonkgushil* 동국대 동양사 연구실 trans., *Jungkuk-ui yechi system* 중국의 예치 시스템 (Suwon: Cheonggye, 2001) Originally, *Chugokutoyusiza* 中國という視座, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995); Kojima Tsuyoshi 小島毅, Shin Hyeon-Seung 신현승 trans., *Sadaebu-ui sidae* 사대부의 시대, (Seoul: Dongasia, 2004) Originally, *Shushigaku to Yōmeigaku* 朱子學と陽明學 (Tokyo: Housoudai, 2004))

¹⁰⁸ Hakbutongbyeon bal, *ibid.*

Subsequently, in c), Yulgok gets more thought-provoking; even if one is committed to the Lu-Wang learning, as long as one is enlightened on something to live up to so that the heart-mind cannot be relaxed, one would be rather better than otherwise. At this juncture, the concept of *jadeuk/zide* can be drawn on again; ‘what to serve’ means the fundamental values to rely on and the ultimate goal to achieve; “what to serve” also makes possible the wakefulness of the heart-mind and, as a result, both voluntary and spontaneous compliance to the teachings of the Sagely Kings as the universal Way. This series of events may indicate that the beginning and end points of what to serve must all arise from within, or self, i.e., the learning from/enlightenment of the heart-mind (*jadeuk/zide*).

From our previous discussion, we may say that Yulgok’s attitude toward learning in general constitutes a kind of out-reaching and open-minded flexibility, which is not a deviation from the ideal of Neo-Confucianism but rather a radical re-awareness of the fundamentals of learning, i.e., the importance of wholehearted moral practice and its wellspring, the heart-mind – this is the bridge to Principle (*li*) as the ultimate source of ethics. At this point, we can see the common subject of the three teachings – the problem of the relationship between the cosmic truth and human (mind); what they are, how they are originally (metaphysically) unified, and how the actual dissociation can be overcome in order to achieve the original unity. In the next section, we are going to take a look at Yulgok’s viewpoint on the heart-mind, human nature, principle, and material force as a tight set.

3. *Yulgok’s metaphysics of Li and Qi: Clarity and Ambiguity*

To help account for Yulgok in the context of Cheng-Zhu learning, I will briefly introduce Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucian metaphysics and its related issues, thereby identifying the position of Yulgok as both an heir and innovator of Zhu Xi’s learning. I will argue that

Yulgok's contribution to Zhu Xi's learning originates with his attitude of *jadeuk/zide*, and that Yulgok's argument on *li* and *qi* may enable us to understand the reason why Yulgok pays attention to the *Laozi* in the context of Zhu Xi's system.

3-1) *Zhu Xi on li and qi*

Generally, Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism is 'structurally' based on the metaphysical assumption that the cosmos including all myriad things comprises Principle (*li*) as the ultimate origin of all things (see below (a)) and Material force (*qi*) as the resource for the reification of all things ((b), (c) and (d)); the genesis of each thing and its nature (*xing* 性) as the core identity are also the results of the combination of *li* and *qi* ((a), (c) and (d)):

- (a) The Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極) is nothing but the Principle (*li*) of all things.¹⁰⁹ If discussed in terms of heaven and earth, then the Great Ultimate [can be said to] exist between heaven and earth; if discussed in terms of all things, then the Great Ultimate [can be said to] exist within every individual thing. [Even] before the existence of the heaven and earth, there must have been this Principle (*li*). That which moves and produces the positive force (*yang* 陽) is just [due to] the Principle; that which stills and produces the negative force (*yin* 陰) is also just [due to] Principle.
太極只是天地萬物之理。在天地言，則天地中有太極；在萬物言，則萬物中各有太極。未有天地之先，畢竟是先有此理。動而生陽，亦只是理；靜而生陰，亦只是理。(ZY 1:1)
- (b) Once there is this Principle (*li*), then there is this material force (*qi*) to move around (*liuixng* 流行) and grow [all things]. Principle does not have shape (*xingti* 形體)...
有此理，便有此氣流行發育。理無形體。(ZY 1:2)
- (c) If [there] exists the *Heavenly Principle* (*tianli* 天理), first, then [there must] be material force (*qi*). Material force accumulates and forms matter (*zhi* 質) [to produce things by], and [then] the natures (of all things) are equipped.
先有箇天理了，卻有氣。氣積爲質，而性具焉。(ZY 1:7)
- (d) The reason humans come into being is just the combination of *Principle* and material force... (hereafter *li* and *qi*)... But since the two [states of] *qi* (*yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽) and the five phases (*wuxing* 五行) [of *qi*] interact and make myriad changes (*jiaogan* 交感 and *wanbian* 萬變), humans and [other] things come into being, and the refinement

¹⁰⁹ "The Great Ultimate is just [translated into] one character, principle (*li*)."(太極只是一箇“理”字。)(ZY 1:4) For the concept of the Great Ultimate, refer to Zhou Dunyi's *Taijitu* 太極圖 (the *Diagram of the Great Ultimate*) and his *Taijitu shuo* 太極圖說 (the *Explanation of the Taijitu*). Zhu Xi emphasized the importance of Zhou Dunyi's *Taijitu* (*shuo*), making use of it to explain his metaphysics of principle (*li*) and material force (*qi*).

(*jing* 精) and coarseness (*cu* 粗) of them are not the same. If [we] discuss it in terms of the one (same) *qi*, then human and [other] things [can be said to] receive this [one] *qi* and are produced; if [we] discuss it in terms of refinement and coarseness, then [we can say that] human has gained the right (*zheng* 正) and transparent (*tong* 通) *qi*; things have gained the partial (*pian* 偏) and opaque (*se* 塞) *qi*. Only humans have gained the right *qi*, and therefore this *li* passes through and is not blocked; things have gained the *qi* that is partial, and therefore this *li* is blocked and does not have wisdom. For example, humans have the round head like the sphere of heaven, and square foot like [the squareness of] earth, and [she/he] is fair, right, tidy, and straight because humans have received the right *qi* of heaven and earth, and so they can know the Way and Principle. [On the other hand,] things have received the partial *qi* of heaven and earth, and so birds and animals are not erect-standing (horizontal); the head (root) of grass and wood are directed downward while the tail (branch) of them are [directed] above...

人之所以生，理與氣合而已…然而二氣五行，交感萬變，故人物之生，有精粗之不同。自一氣而言之，則人物皆受是氣而生；自精粗而言，則人得其氣之正且通者，物得其氣之偏且塞者。惟人得其正，故是理通而無所塞；物得其偏，故是理塞而無所知。且如人，頭圓象天，足方象地，平正端直，以其受天地之正氣，所以識道理，有知識。物受天地之偏氣，所以禽獸橫生，草木頭生向下，尾反在上… (ZY 4:41)

- (e) Someone asked, “Does *li* precede [*qi*], or does *qi* precede [*li*]?” [Zhu Xi] answered, “There has never been any occasion in which *li* is separated from *qi*. However, *li* is ‘something beyond shape’ (*xing* 形: visibility, concreteness, *xingershangzhe* 形而上者); *qi* is ‘something with shape’ (*xingexiazhe* 形而下者).’ If discussed in terms of ‘beyond or with shape,’ how can the priority and posteriority not exist! *Li* does not have shape; *qi* is coarse (*cu*), and therefore it has dregs (*zhazi* 渣滓).”

問，“先有理，抑先有氣？”曰，“理未嘗離乎氣。然理形而上者，氣形而下者。自形而上言，豈無先後！理無形，氣便粗，有渣滓。” (ZY 1:10)

- (f) Generally, *qi* can condense, solidify, and act; however, *li* has no-emotion and volition (*wu qingyi* 無情意), no-calculation (*wu jidu* 無計度), no-action (*wu zaozuo* 無造作; no-deliberate action).

蓋氣則能凝結造作，理卻無情意，無計度，無造作。 (ZY 1:13)

All the quotations above reflect Zhu’s mature view, having been spoken after he was sixty years old. As seen in (a) and (d), the theoretical and axiological priority is given to *li*. It is explained as the *Great Ultimate* (*taiji*), something above visible shape (*xingershangzhe*), the Heavenly Principle (*tianli*) and the Way (*dao* 道),¹¹⁰ whose characteristics are said to have no shaped body (*wu xingt*), no emotion and volition (*wu qingyi*), no calculation (*wu jidu*), no action (*wu zaozuo*) (Refer to (f)). Nevertheless, *li* is supposed to have control over *qi* and all

¹¹⁰ ZY 1:5, 1:9, 1:12, 4:24, 18:77, etc. In ZY 2, the meaning of “*tiandao* 天道” is the orbits of heavenly body; however, *tiandao* as the orbits was, no doubt, expected to eventually subscribe to *tiandao* as the metaphysical *li*.

things (*zhuzai* 主宰).¹¹¹ On the other hand, *qi* as the resource for creation is described as something with shape (*xingerxiazhe*), whose characteristic is its flow of movement (*liuxing*, *jiaogan* and *wanbian*), and therefore has such various states as clear/turbid (*qing/zhuo*), pure/adulterate (*cun/bo*), refined/coarse (*jing/cu*), partial/right (whole) (*pian/zheng* (*quan* 全)), transparent/opaque (*tong/se*), etc ((**d**), (**e**) and (**f**)).

Zhu Xi explains the unity of all things and the diversity of individual entities by Cheng Yi's maxim, "*li* is one, yet differentiated into various manifestations (*liyi-fenshu* 理一分殊)." It is generally understood that *li* as the Great Ultimate is only one and the basis for the unity (refer to (**a**)), but when *li* functions in various concrete things, the actualized features of *li* are various although the differentiated *principles* are originated from and rooted in the original *li*. Even if this maxim looks viable, it can lead to more complicated questions because Zhu Xi did not clearly explain why the differentiation and various manifestations occur.

The only clue to the questions about various manifestations of *li* is to make use of the idea of (**d**) that *qi*'s various states cause various entities, and, therefore, there are variously adapted and manifested *li*-s. At this point, another problem arises; how *li* and *qi* interact and intermingle. However, Zhu Xi does not clearly explicate the process of *liyi-fenshu*. In fact, as Chen Lai points out, he tries to explain the maxim of *liyi-fenshu* by the thesis, "*Li*-s in all things are the same, yet their *qi*-s are different" (*litongqi* 理同氣異).¹¹² However, the concepts of 'sameness' and 'difference' are not efficient enough to explain the relation of *li* and *qi* in the

¹¹¹ This explanation of *li* is, of course, confusing not only us but also the students of the Cheng-Zhu school because the usual connotation of this word is the action with volition, calculation and deliberation. (We will encounter this theme later again, in Yulgok's Suneon) Refer to **ZY** 1:17, 1:20, etc.

¹¹² Chen Lai, *Zhuxi zhexue yanjiu* (Shanghai: Huadongshida, 2000), p. 125. Chen takes an example from Zhu's letter to Li Tong 李侗 (7th of Aug., 1161 of the lunar calendar), in which Zhu shows his theoretical succession to Li Tong (and Cheng Yichuan). The thesis of *litongqi* is available in and frequently cited from Zhu Xi's letter to Huang Shangbai 黃尚伯. Refer to *Zhuxi ji*, volume 4, p. 2222.

process of *liyi-fenshu*; they refer only to the sameness and difference between *li*-s only or *qi*-s only. This is why in a bid to explain the *li-qi* dynamics of the process of *liyi-fenshu*, Zhu Xi holds other contradictory theses. For example, “*Qi*-s are the same, but *li*-s are different” (*qitongliyi* 氣同理異),¹¹³ “*Li*-s are the same, and *qi*-s are the same, too” (*litongqitong* 理同氣同),¹¹⁴ “*Qi*-s are different, and *li*-s are also different” (*qiyiliyi* 氣異理異).¹¹⁵

According to Han Won-Jin 韓元震 (1682-1751, styled Namdang 南塘), in order to understand these contradictory assertions, we need to catch the original imports of each words, so to speak; “*Li*-s in all things are the same, yet their *qi*-s are different” (*litong qiyi*) should be read as an emphasis on the origin (*bonwon/benyuan* 本源); “*Qi*-s are different, and *li*-s are also different” (*qiyi liyi*) should be read as an emphasis on change (*yuhaeng/liuixng* 流行); “*Li*-s are the same, and *qi*-s are the same, too” (*litong qitong*) and “*Qi*-s are the same, but *li*-s are different” (*qitong liyi*) can be regarded as special cases in discussing either the origin or the change of *yin/yang*, five phases (*wuxing*) of *qi*, and all myriad things.¹¹⁶ Han Won-Jin’s comprehensive understanding (*hwalgan/huokan* 活看 and *jonghoeng toeji/congheng tuizhi* 從橫推之: lively reading and expatiation from all angles) of Zhu Xi’s theses takes into consideration the dynamic and multi-dimensional aspects of the *li-qi* relationship that cannot be captured only by the concepts, “sameness” and “difference.” Han’s comprehensiveness can be traced back to Yulgok.

¹¹³ *Zhuxi ji*, volume 4, p. 2222.

¹¹⁴ *Zhuxi ji*, volume 5, p. 2929.

¹¹⁵ *Zhuxi ji*, volume 6, p. 3196.

¹¹⁶ (Joseon) Han Won-Jin 韓元震 (1682-1751, styled Namdang 南塘), *Juja eonron dongyi ko* 朱子言論同異攷, *kwon* 1 (Originally published in 1741). I used the original text and translation from Kwak Shin-Whan 곽신환 trans., *Juja eonron dongyi ko* 주자언론 동이고 (Seoul: Somyeong, 2002), pp. 28-29.

3-2) Yulgok's Self-attainment of *liyi-fenshu* and the problem of Buddhism

Yulgok reconstructs the maxim, *liyi-fenshu* by contrasting the characteristics of *li* and *qi* and suggesting their relationship in the process of differentiation – *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* 理通氣局 (*Li* passes through [universally] and *qi* gets limited [to the particulars]).¹¹⁷ The origin of Han Won-Jin's comprehensive understanding and the intention of Yulgok's proposal of *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* are clearly shown in a letter of Yulgok:

T1: The thesis, *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* should be spoken of in terms of the origin (*bonche/benti* 本體), and the changes (*yuhaeng/liuixng* 流行) cannot be explained regardless of the origin.

T2: The reason why human nature is not animal (plant) nature is because *qi* gets limited [to the particulars] (*kiguk/qiju*);

T3: The reason why the *Principle* (*li*) of human can be identified with that of animal (plant) is that *li* passes through [universally] (*litong*).

Ex: Square and round containers are not the same; however, the water of a square one and that of a round one are the same. Likewise, the shape [size] of a big bottle and that of a small bottle are not the same; however, the void (emptiness) of a big one and that of a small one are the same.

T1^R: The reason why all the *qi*-s have one origin is because *li* passes through [universally]; the reason for the ten thousands differentiation of *li* is because of *kiguk/qiju*. In the origin is already equipped the changes; the origin exists amid the changes. Judging from this, is my thesis, *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju*, one-sided indeed?

理通氣局, 要自本體上說出, 亦不可離了本體, 別求流行也. 人之性 非物之性者, 氣之局也. 人之理即物之理者, 理之通也. 方圓之器不同, 而器中之水 一也. 大小之瓶不同, 而瓶中之空 一也. 氣之一本者, 理之通故也. 理之萬殊者, 氣之局故也. 本體之中, 流行具焉. 流行之中, 本體存焉. 由是推之, 理通氣局之說, 果落一邊乎?¹¹⁸

In the above passage, **T1** and **T1^R** show that the thesis, *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* is basically an elaboration on Zhu Xi's *liyil-bunsu/liyi-fenshu* thesis (**T1^R**), and that *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* takes into consideration the dynamics of *liyil-bunsu/liyi-fenshu*, i.e.,

¹¹⁷ Song Seok-Ku 宋錫球, Yi Yulgok 李栗谷 (Taipei: Dadongtushu gongshe, 1993), p. 60; Hwang Ui-Dong, Yulgok-ui liki ron: liki-ji-myo-reul jungshim-euro 율곡의 리기론 – 리기지묘를 중심으로, *ibid.*, pp. 163-165; Kim Hyeong-Chan 김형찬, Joseon Yuhak-ui li kae'nyeom-ae kwanhan yeonku 조선 유학의 리관에 관한 연구, in Hankook sasang yeonkuhoe ed., *Joseon yuhak-ui jayeon cheolhak* 조선 유학의 자연철학, (Seoul: Yemoonseowon, 1998), p. 207.

¹¹⁸ “Yeo Seong Ho-Won” 與成浩原, Seo (2), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), p. 98.

the aspect of the changes (*yuhaeng/liuixng*) (**T1** and **T1^R**) by adopting the concepts, “passing (penetration, *tong*)” and “limitation (localization, *kuk/ju*).”

At this juncture, Yulgok’s inspiration drawn from Buddhism should be noted in both his examples and logic (**Ex**). As Yulgok himself, in another letter, confesses that he borrows the examples from Buddhism,¹¹⁹ the metaphoric use of “water” and “emptiness,” and “containers” and “bottles” has its root in his favorite scripture, (*Su*) *Neungeom kyeong*/ (*Shou*) *Lengyan jing* (首) 楞嚴經 (*Śūraṅgama Sūtra*).¹²⁰ The common characteristic of water and

¹¹⁹ “Dap Seong Ho-Won” 答成浩原 3, Seo (2), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), p. 77.

¹²⁰ Shramana Paramiti (Banlamidi 般刺蜜帝) trans., *Dafoding shou lengyan jing* 大佛頂首楞嚴經 *juan* 2, Koryo (Korea) Tripitaka (=K. 高麗大藏經, the extant oldest version of Tripitaka in Chinese) No. 426; Taisho Tripitaka (=T. 大正新修大藏經) No. 945: (vol.49) 111c15-22; 114c07-12. And I benefited from the *Hangul (Korean) Tripitaka Retrieval System* built by Electron Buddhist Text Institute of Dongguk University. (<http://ebti.dongguk.ac.kr>) English translation from the Chinese version is adopted from the *Shurangama Sutra*, translated by the Buddhist Text Translation Society. (<http://www.e-sangha.com>) As Song Si-Yeol and the *Annals* reports that Yulgok read and enjoyed this sutra since childhood under the influence of his father, Yi Won-Soo. Refer to the article of 24th March, 1566, *Myeongjong shilrok*, *kwon* 32, *ibid.*; *Songja daejeon* 宋子大全, *kwon* 19.

“The Buddha told Ananda, ‘All the aspects of everything in the world, such as big and small, inside and outside, amount to the dust before you. Do not say the seeing stretches and shrinks. Consider the example of a square container in which a square of emptiness is seen. I ask you further: is the square emptiness that is seen in the square container a fixed square shape, or is it not fixed as a square shape? If it is a fixed square shape, when it is switched to a round container the emptiness would not be round. If it is not a fixed shape, then when it is in the square container it should not be a square-shaped emptiness. You say you do not know where the meaning lies. The nature of the meaning being thus, how can you speak of its location? Ananda, if you wished there to be neither squareness nor roundness, you would only need to remove the container. The essential emptiness has no shape, and so do not say that you would also have to remove the shape from the emptiness...’”

佛告阿難：「一切世間，大小內外，諸所事業，各屬前塵，不應說言，見有舒縮。譬如方器，中見方空，吾復問汝：此方器中，所見方空，爲復定方？爲不定方？若定方者，則安圓器，空應不圓；若不定者，在方器中，應無方空。汝言不知斯義所在，義性如是，云何爲在？阿難！若復欲令入無方圓，但除器方，空體無方，不應說言，更除虛空方相所在。(T. 945:111c15-22);

“Ananda, suppose a man picked up a kalavinka pitcher (bottle), up its two holes, lifted up the pitcher filled with emptiness, and walking some thousand miles away, presented it to another country. You should be aware that the consciousness skandha is like that.”

阿難！譬如有人，取頻伽瓶，塞其兩孔，滿中擎空，千里遠行，用餉他國，識陰當知，亦復如是。(T.945: 114c07)

emptiness is their ability to permeate and fill whatever space of spatial beings,¹²¹ whereas that of containers and bottles is to partition off space into inside and outside by their corporeality. The shapelessness of water and emptiness can mean all the possible shapes because they can fit in any shapes of containers, bottles, and so on. This is what Yulgok means by the universal penetration of *li* that does not have the initial shape and corporeality. However, a specific shape of water and emptiness, formed by a particular container or bottle cannot be the same as another shape of them, formed by that container or bottle although the constitution of all water and the emptiness of any container or bottle remain the same things. This is what Yulgok means by the limitation (particularization) of/by *qi* that has various forms and states. What is interesting here is that although various shapes of water and emptiness are caused by various shapes of containers and bottles, the various shapes of water and emptiness would be impossible without their original shapelessness. Accordingly, the limitation of/by *qi* and differentiation of *li* cannot be independent of the universal penetration of *li*. In other words, the universal *li* needs to be considered to guarantee the limitation of/by *qi* and differentiation of *li*. This is what Yulgok means by “In the origin is already equipped the changes; the origin exists amid the changes” (T1^R) and the entire T1. By proposing *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju*, Yulgok seems successful in elucidating the dynamic dimension of *liyil-bunsu/liyi-fenshu* thesis, which has remained unsubstantiated in Zhu Xi.

From the foregoing, we again notice Yulgok’s attitude toward learning – *jadeuk/zide* 自得; he suggests his own understanding and expression gained from his deeper reflection and liberal use of other teachings. In fact, Yulgok starts his argument, “The four-character words, *Li-tong-ki-guk* are, I think, *my self-attainment* (*jawi kyeondeuk/ziwei jiande* 自謂見得). But I

¹²¹ It might sound odd to say that emptiness permeates and fills space. However, this can be translated as ‘whatever corporeal and spatial beings have emptiness (empty space) in them.’ In a bid to lead us to an easier understanding, Yulgok takes the example of water that is not seen in the *Lengyan jing*. In fact, water cannot be an accurate example for *li* that is not material. However, due to its indeterminate fluidity and flexibility, water can be likened to emptiness and *li*.

am afraid that my reading might not be enough, so the similar words to this effect might exist; nevertheless, I have not seen them.”¹²² Interestingly, his fear reflects his confidence, too; as long as learning is gained through deeper thought, it can parallel the right learning taught by the Sages: “Although [I believe] it is meant by the sages and worthies, I have not yet seen them in any writing.”¹²³

However, although he says that he has not seen his four-word thesis in Confucian books, the influence from Buddhist logic as well as the examples borrowed from Buddhism seems not to have been addressed and appreciated enough. When Yulgok tries to grasp the dynamics of *liyi-fenshu* in using the concepts of “penetration” (*tong*) and “limitation” (*kuk/ju*) drawn from the examples of emptiness (water) and bottles (containers), his logic virtually verges on that of Huayan 華嚴 Buddhism regardless of his awareness:

Th-0: The exposition of the Non-Obstruction of *Li* against *Shi* 事 (events, phenomena); in the ten theorems there are such relationships of *Li* and *Shi* as fusion and dissolving, co-existence and extinction, co-operation and conflict, and the like.

Th-1: The theorem that *Li* [must] embrace *Shi*: *Li*, Principle that extends everywhere, has no boundaries or limitations (*fenshan* 分限) by nature, but *Shi*, the objects that are embraced [by *Li*], has boundaries and limitations. In each and every *Shi*, the *Li* spreads all over without omission or deficiency. Why? Because the truth of *Li* is indivisible.

Th-1-c: Thus, each and every a (minute) dust absorbs and embraces the infinite truth of *Li* in a perfect and complete manner.

Th-2: The theorem that *Shi* [must] embrace *Li*. *Shi*, the matter [or event] that embraces, has boundaries and limitations, and *Li*, the truth that is embraced [by things], has no boundaries or limitations. **Th-2-1)** Yet this limited *Shi* is completely identical, not partially identical, with *Li*. Why? Because the *Shi* has no substance – it is the selfsame *Li*. **Th-2-c:** Therefore, without causing the slightest damage to itself, a dust particle can embrace the whole universe. If a particle of dust is so, all other *dharma* (being)-s should also be so. Contemplate on this...

Ex: The entire ocean is [embodied] in one wave, yet the ocean does not shrink. A small wave includes the great ocean, and yet the wave does not expand. **(Ex-c¹)** Though the ocean simultaneously extends itself to all waves, it does not by this fact diversify itself; **(Ex-c²)** and though all waves simultaneously include the great ocean, they are not one. When the great ocean embraces one wave, nothing hinders it from embracing all other waves with its whole body. When one wave includes the great ocean, all other waves

¹²² “理通氣局四字, 自謂見得, 而又恐珥讀書不多, 先有此等言, 而未之見也。” (“Dap seong Ho-Won” 答成浩原 4, Seo (2), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), pp. 80-81)

¹²³ “雖是聖賢之意, 而未見於文字。” (“Dap Seong Ho-Won” 4, *ibid.*; *KTYJ* (III), *ibid.*)

also include the ocean in its entirety. There is no obstruction whatsoever between them. Contemplate on this...

(My paraphrasing, modification, and underlining)¹²⁴

理事無礙觀第二, 但理事鎔、融、存、亡、逆、順、通有十門。一, 理遍於事門, 謂能遍之理, 性無分限, 所遍之事, 分位差別, 一一事中, 理皆全遍, 非是分遍。何以故? 彼真理不可分故。二, 事遍於理門。謂能遍之事, 是有分限, 所遍之理, 要無分限, 此有分之事, 於無分之理, 全同非同。何以故? 以事無體, 還如理故。是故一塵不壞而遍法界也。如一塵一切法亦然, 思之...如全一大海在一波中而海非小, 如一小波在(匝)於大海, 而波非大, 同時全遍於諸波, 而海非異; 俱時各在(匝)於大海, 而波非一。又大海全遍一波時, 不妨舉體全遍諸波; 一波全在(匝)於大海時, 諸波亦各全在(匝)於大海, 互不相礙。思之...¹²⁵

First of all, in **Th-0**, we see the general compatibility of the *li-shi* relationship of Huayan with the *li-qi* relationship of Neo-Confucianism; they subsist mutually in each other; nevertheless, they are in a state of tension. ((b), “*Li* and *qi* are inseparable, yet are not intermingled (不相離; 不相雜),” and “*Li* and *qi* are one yet two (一而二; 二而一)”) Both **Th-1** and **Th-2** overlap with Yulgok’s *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* thesis, in idea; “no boundaries and limitations” (*wu fenxian*) is comparable to “universal penetration or permeation” (*tong*); “boundaries and limitations” (*fenxian*) to “particularization or localization” (*kuk/ju*).¹²⁶ As a

¹²⁴ The above translation is, with my substantial modification, adapted from Garma C. C. Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality – the philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (The Pennsylvania State University, 1971), pp. 214-215. For a brief discussion, I did not quote the other 8 theorems; **Th-3**. The production of *Shi* must rely on *Li* (依理成事); **Th-4**. Through *Shi* the *Li* is illustrated (事能顯理); **Th-5**. Though *Li* the *Shi* is annulled (以理奪事); **Th-6**. *Shi* can hide the *Li* (事能隱理); **Th-7**. The true *Li* is *Shi* itself (真理即事); **Th-8**. Things and events [*shifa* 事法] themselves are *Li* (事法即理); **Th-9**. The true *Li* is not *Shi* (真理非事); **Th-10**. Things and events [*shifa*] are not *Li*. (法非理) However, I think **Th-0**, **1**, and **2** can summarize and include the other 8 theorems.

¹²⁵ Dushun 杜順 (557-640), *Huayan fajie guanmen* 華嚴法界觀門. I consulted a modern, punctuated text from Zhongmi 宗密, *Zhu huayan fajie guanmen* 注華嚴法界觀門, in Shi Jun 石峻, Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, Fang Litian 方立天, Xu Kangsheng 許抗生, Le Shouming 樂壽明 ed., *Zhongguo Fojiao sixiangziliao xuanbian* 中國佛教思想資料選編, 2 *juan* – 2 *ce* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 405-406.

¹²⁶ There have been discussions among scholars, about Huayan thought’s influence on Yulgok’s thesis. Scholars have made an effort to find out the identical expression with *tong-kuk/ju*, from Huayan Buddhist works. In fact, as Yi Byeong-Do 이병도 points out, *tong-kuk/ju* expression can be found out in Chengguan 澄觀 (738-835, styled Qingliang’s 清涼) commentary on the *Huayan Sūtra* and sub-commentary on it (*Huayan jing shu* 華嚴經隨疏 and *Huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 華嚴經隨疏演義鈔), while Bae Jong-Ho 배종호 is not sure of the direct relationship between Yulgok and Chengguan although Bae carefully accepts the possibility of Huayan thought’s influence on Yulgok. (Yi Byeong-Do,

result, Huayan philosophy has such a unique idea as **Th-1-c**, **Th-2-c**, and **Ex**, which is also shown in *(Su) Neungeom kyeong/(Shou) Lengyan jing (Śūraṅgama Sūtra)* that was used by Yulgok; the sutra sets forth the same idea after it discusses the examples of emptiness and containers (bottles). **(Ex-c¹)** and **(Ex-c²)** are, respectively, comparable to **T3** and **T2** in Yulgok's thesis. It is true that **Th-2-1** seems dislocated in our comparison. However, this kind of idea is closely discussed by the successors of Yulgok in terms of *li*'s mastery over the change of *qi*, as will be shown presently.

In fact, despite the Confucian characteristics in its purpose, the formation of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's *liyi-fenshu* could not have been possible without Buddhist influence, particularly, Huayan (and Chan) thought. Accordingly, Yulgok's *litong-kikuk/litong-qiju* cannot stay away from the historical connection with (Huayan) Buddhism. Moreover, Yulgok obviously borrows the examples from Buddhism, particularly pro-Huayan sutra, which leads him more closely to Huayan thought. At this juncture, what we need to think about is the very unique character of Huayan thought; this thought is regarded as unique to Chinese Buddhism and influenced by Daoism.¹²⁷ Accordingly, in the next section, we are going to examine whether or not the thesis of *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* contains the traces of Daoism.

Yulgok-ui saengae-wa sasang 栗谷의生涯와思想 (Seoul: Seomundang, 1973); Bae Jong-Ho, *Yulgok-ui litong-kikuk-seol* 栗谷의理通氣局說, *Hankuk yuhak-ui cheolhak-jeok jeonkae* 韓國儒學의哲學的展開 (Seoul: Yeonsae daehakkyo, 1985), Vol.2) However, my discussion does not focus on finding and showing the identical phrase, particularly *tong-kuk/ju*; rather, my focus is on the similarity in idea, between the general and typical argument of Huayan and Yulgok's thesis. This is why I quote from the founder of Huayan school, Duxun.

It is noteworthy that there were other important sources that summarized the teachings of such representative Huayan masters as Duxun, Zhiyan 智儼(602-668), Chengguan, et al., and were being circulated in Korea at the time. Interestingly, they are all edited by Huayan-Chan monks and include the phrase, *tong-kuk/ju*. (Song 宋) Yanshou 延壽 ed., *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 (K.1449; T.2016) and (Song) Chenshi 陳實 ed., *Dazang yilan ji* 大藏一覽集 (K.1504).

¹²⁷ Zhiyan's *Souxuan ji* 搜玄記, Fazang's *Tanxuan ji* 探玄記, etc. include "Xuan 玄 (darkness or profundity) of the *Daode jing* Ch.1. (*Xuanzhi yo xuan* 玄之又玄)" Chengguan openly

3-3) *Litong-kiguk/litong-qiju and the traces of Daoist metaphysics*

At the beginning of the argument for the four-word thesis, Yulgok emphasizes the inseparability of *li* and *qi* in light of (e).¹²⁸ This position of Yulgok obviously relates to his evaluation of the philosophy of Luo Qinsun 羅欽順 (1465-1547, styled Zhengan 整菴) of the Ming; Yulgok elsewhere praises Luo as “excellent.”¹²⁹ For Yulgok *li* cannot be discussed without attaching it to *qi*, and it could have been regarded as logically plausible to understand

told that his learning in Huayan was a Buddhist elaboration on the *Daode jing*’s “*xuanzhi youxuan*.” Refer to Kamata Shikeo, *ibid.*, p. 88.

¹²⁸ Yulgok finds the starting point of his philosophical investigation of *li* and *qi*, in the “**Four-Seven**” debate (*sachil ron* 四七論, the debates on the origin of the four sprouts of morality (*sadan* 四端 [Chi. *siduan*]) and the seven emotions (*chiljeong* 七情 [Chi. *qiqing*]) – The four states of the heart-mind: commiseration, shame and dislike, courtesy and modesty, and discernment of right from wrong (*Mencius* 2A:6), and the seven emotions mean various emotions such as joy, anger, sorrow, pleasure, love, hatred, and desire seen in the *Book of Rites* and the *Book of the Mean*.

In the debate with Seong Ho-Won (1535-98, styled Ukye 牛溪), Yulgok scathingly criticizes Toegye’s thesis, “In the case of the four sprouts of morality, *li* actively leads and *qi* passively follows it (*li’bal-yi-ki’suji* 理發而氣隨之 [Chi. *lifa er qi suizhi*]), while in the case of the seven (various) emotions, *qi* actively leads and *li* passively rides on (accompanies) it (*ki’bal-yi-li’seungji* 氣發而理乘之 [Chi. *qifa er li shengzhi*]).” Yulgok thinks that Toegye regards *li* as making a move and being able to drive *qi*, however, *li* cannot be considered to have a movement (refer to (f)). For Yulgok, it is the only theoretically possible and plausible that *qi* always leads and *li* always rides on it (*ki’bal-li’seung-yildo* 氣發理乘一途 [Chi. *qifa lisheng yitu*]) because he thinks that what we can soundly vindicate about the concrete existence in us as well as the universe is only emotions and *qi*’s movement, and that the four sprouts is not something intrinsically different from the various emotions but the specific states to be singled out of the seven emotions, and therefore the former can be included in the latter (*chiljeong-po-sadan* 七情包四端 [Chi. *chiqing bao siduan*]).

For a full introduction and analysis of the Four-Seven debate, refer to Edward Y.J. Chung, *ibid.* And there is an English translation of the four-seven debate: Michael C. Kalton with Oaksook C. Kim, et al., *The Four-Seven Debate – an annotated translation of the most famous controversy in Korean Neo-Confucian thought* (Albany: SUNY, 1994)

¹²⁹ “Dap Seong Ho-Won” 答成浩原 2 and 6, Seo (2), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), p. 67 and 95. Yulgok says that Luo Qinsun is higher than Toegye in interpretation of Zhu Xi’s viewpoint on the relationship of *li* and *qi*. Yulgok explains that although Luo’s words are exaggerated a little when he discusses the inseparability of *li* and *qi*, Luo must have not meant *li* and *qi* to be the same thing.

the meaning of *liyi-fenshu* by *li* and *qi*. To set the backdrop against the argument of *litong-kikuk/ litong-qiju*, Yulgok succinctly clarifies the attributes of *li* and *qi*:

Li and *qi* are originally inseparable and seem to be a single thing; that in which they are different is that *li* has no concrete shape (*muhyeong/wuxing* 無形) but *qi* does, *li* is of no action (*muwi/wuwei* 無爲). That which is of no shape and no action and is the master (*ju/zhu* 主) of that which has shape and action is *li*. That which has shape and action and is the instrument of that which is of no shape and no action is *qi*. *Li* is formless, *qi* has form; therefore, *li* passes through, and *qi* gets limited. *Li* is non-active, and *qi* is active; therefore, *qi* issues, and *li* rides on it.¹³⁰

理氣元不相離. 似是一物, 而其所以異者. 理無形也; 氣有形也. 理無爲也; 氣有爲也. 無形無爲, 而爲有形有爲之主者, 理也; 有形有爲, 而爲無形無爲之器者, 氣也. 理無形, 而氣有形, 故理通, 而氣局. 理無爲, 而氣有爲, 故氣發, 而理乘.¹³¹

As seen in the above, *li* is of “no action” (*muwi/wuwei* 無爲) as well as “no shape” (*muhyeong/wuxing*),” while *qi* has “action” (*yuwi/youwei* 有爲) as well as “shape” (*yuhyeong/youxing*). Also noteworthy is that Yulgok uses the terms of Laozi – *wuwei* (no action) and *youwei* (action) – in order to explain *li* and *qi* instead of using *wuzaozuo* (no action) and *zaozuo* (action). It can be pointed out as well that Yulgok’s combined phrase, *muhyeong-yuwi* (*wuxing-youwei*) recalls us of Zhuangzi’s “*wuwei-wuxing*,” (Zhuangzi 6:3) As a matter of fact, Zhu Xi did not directly use *wuwei/youwei* to explain *li* and *qi*. In the *Laozi*, *wuwei* is considered to be the feature of the Way that possesses the almighty power of leaving nothing undone (*wubuwei* 無不為, *Laozi* Chs. 37 and 48), while *youwei* is the artificial actions of humans that have limited results and undesirable side-effects. *Wuwei* and *youwei* in Yulgok’s context have basically the same connotations as in the *Laozi*; *li* of *wuwei* is of the almighty power, i.e., the master (control) over *qi* of *youwei* although it is not active. And again, the *Laozi* says that being (*you* 有) is useful due to non-being (*wu* 無) as container is useful thanks to its emptiness; therefore, being and non-being are inseparable (*Laozi* Ch. 11); for Yulgok likewise, shapeless *li* and shape-forming *qi* are inseparable. Yulgok consistently emphasizes that *li* is

¹³⁰ Translation is adapted from Michael C. Kalton with Oaksook C. Kim, et al., *ibid*, pp. 175-177.

¹³¹ “Dap Seong Ho-Won” 4, *CWYG*, *ibid.*; *KTYJ* (III), p. 81.

able to be always with/over *qi*, and both *li* and *qi* can never be separated. Based on this inseparability of *li* and *qi*, Yulgok explicates the notions of *litong* and *kikuk*, respectively:

What does it mean to say that *li* passes through [universally]? *Li* has neither origin nor end, neither before nor after. Having neither beginning nor end, neither before nor after, therefore the condition of not yet having responded (*kam'eung/ganying* 感應) is not anterior, nor is the condition of having responded posterior [the thesis of Master Cheng]. Thus, when it rides on *qi* and is involved in activity, there are innumerable differences and varieties, but the wondrousness of its original state is nowhere absent. When *qi* is one-sided, then *li* is likewise one-sided, but the one-sidedness owes not to *li*, but to *qi*. When it comes to the clear or the turbid, the pure or the mixed, be it sediment, ashes, excrements, or filth, *Li* is in the midst of all of them as the nature of each, and the wonder of its original state (*bonyeon ji myo/ benran zhi mao* 本然之妙) does not hinder their being what they are. This is what is characterized as the pervasiveness of *li* (*li*'s [universal] passing through)

理通者。何謂也？理者，無本末也，無先後也。無本末無先後，故未應不是先。已應不是後（程子說）。是故，乘氣流行，參差不齊，而其本然之妙，無乎不在。氣之偏，則理亦偏，而所偏非理也，氣也。氣之全，則理亦全，而所全非理也，氣也。至於清濁粹駁。糟粕煨燼。糞壤污穢之中。理無所不在，各爲其性，而其本然之妙，則不害其自若也。此之謂理之通也。

What does it mean to say that *qi* gets limited? *Qi* is already involved with concrete form; therefore, it has a beginning and end, anterior and posterior. In its original state (*ki ji bon/qi zhi ben* 氣之本), *qi* has a translucent unity and clear emptiness and that is all. How could it ever be *qi* of sediment, ashes, excrements, if filth! It's only that it ascends and descends, and flies about without ever ceasing; therefore, there are innumerable differences and varieties, and the myriad changes arise. Since *qi* is in the active process, there are cases in which it does not lose its original state, and other cases in which it does lose it. When it has lost its original state, then the original state of *qi* is not present in any way. The clear is clear *qi*, not turbid *qi*. Sediment and ashes have the *qi* of sediment and ashes, not the translucently unified clear and vacuous *qi*. It's not like the presence of *li* in all things, wherein the wondrousness of its original state is present in all. This is what is characterized as "*qi* gets limited."¹³²

氣局者，何謂也？氣已涉形迹，故有本末也，有先後也。氣之本，則湛一清虛而已。曷嘗有糟粕煨燼，糞壤污穢之氣哉？惟其升降飛揚，未嘗止息，故參差不齊，而萬變生焉。於是氣之流行也。有不失其本然者，有失其本然者，既失其本然，則氣之本然者。已無所在，偏者，偏氣也，非全氣也。清者，清氣也，非濁氣也。糟粕煨燼，糟粕煨燼之氣也，非湛一清虛之氣也。非若理之於萬物，本然之妙，無乎不在也，此所謂氣之局也。¹³³

Yulgok suggests a clarification of the thesis of *liyi-fenshu* by saying that *li* is one and penetrates into everything; *qi* varies and generates concrete things, in each of which the one *li*

¹³² Translation is adapted from Michael C. Kalton with Oaksook C. Kim, et al., *ibid*, pp. 175-177.

¹³³ "Dap Seong Ho-Won" 4, *CWYG*, *ibid.*; *KTYJ* (III), pp. 81-82.

is underlying; however, it functions within each limited condition although its original quality is still preserved and can never be damaged.

In elaborating the notion of the universal penetration and omnipresence of *li*, Yulgok borrows the ideas and expressions from the *Zhuangzi* 22:6.¹³⁴ As Wing-tist Chan points out, Chan (Zen) Master Wenyan 文偃 (864-949, Styled Yunmen 雲門) also appropriated the same idea and metaphor of the *Zhuangzi*¹³⁵ in order to inculcate into his student the meaning of Buddha as the omnipresent truth. In fact, it is no doubt that Yulgok enjoyed reading the *Zhuangzi* as well as the *Laozi*, given that a prosaic poem, Kyeongpodae bu 鏡浦臺賦, that was written when he was 10 years old, includes some paragraphs from the *Zhuangzi*,¹³⁶ and it is possible that Yulgok was aware of both the original text of the *Zhuangzi* and the application by Chan teachings, given his interest in Buddhism.

By using the simpler but still metaphysical concepts and examples of Daoism, Yulgok successfully summarizes the key Neo-Confucian metaphysical issues of *li* and *qi*, with improved clarity. However, as will be discussed below, his clarification is not a complete solution but a renewed setting for Neo-Confucian metaphysical and ethical inquiries.

¹³⁴ “Dongguozi 東郭子 asked Zhuangzi, ‘What is called *Dao* and where is it?’ ‘It is everywhere (*wusuo buzai* 無所不在),’ replied Zhuangzi. Dongguozi said, ‘It will not do unless you are more specific.’ ‘It is in the ant,’ said Zhuangzi. Dongguozi said, ‘Why is it so low down?’ ‘It is in the weeds.’ ‘Why is it going even lower?’ ‘It is in a potsherd.’ ‘Why is it still lower?’ ‘It is in the excrement and urine (*shini* 屎溺),’ said Zhuangzi. Dongguozi was speechless.” (東郭子問於莊子曰, 所謂道, 惡乎在? 莊子曰, 無所不在。東郭子曰, 期而後可。莊子曰, 在螻蟻。曰, 何其下邪? 曰, 在稊稗。曰, 何其愈下邪? 曰, 在瓦甓。曰, 何其愈甚邪? 曰, 在屎溺。) Translation is adapted from Wing-tist Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 203.

¹³⁵ Wing-tist Chan, *ibid.* Refer to *Yunmenshijue* 雲門屎橛 (Yunmen’s excrement-stick), *Chanzone wumenguan* 禪宗無門關, 21st case (*ze* 則). Other English translations are available; Kasuki Sekida trans., *The Gateless Gate, Two Zen Classics – Mumonkan and Heikiganroku* (New York, Tokyo: Weatherhill Inc., 1977), p. 77-78, etc. As is known, it is not clear whether *gan shijue* 乾屎橛 means ‘a dried excrement-cleaning stick’ or ‘a stick-like dried excrement.’

¹³⁶ “Kyeongpo dae bu” 鏡浦臺賦, Appendix to *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I), pp. 197-201.

3-4) *Clarity and ambiguity of Yulgok on li and qi, and later unfolding*

A possible question to ask about Yulgok's thesis on *li* and *qi* is: as far as *li* and *qi* are not separable, *qi* cannot be thought to move around by itself; however, why is *qi* explained as if it moves by itself and *li* does not exist and has nothing to do with it when it ascends, descends, and flies about? In light of the maxim, *liyi-fenshu*, the above question can be translated as: how should we consider those variously manifested *li*-s?; as long as *li*'s various manifestations are the results of the combination of *li* and various *qi*, and the results have regularity, i.e., the regularity of each concrete thing, can we regard *li*'s various manifestations as differentiated and different *li*-s (*fenshu zhi li* 分殊之理) rather than the simple repetitions of the original same (one) *li*? Given that in **T2** and **Ex** of the foregoing section (*Yulgok's Self-attainment of liyi-fenshu and the problem of Buddhism*), Yulgok accepts the difference between human nature and animal nature, the squareness and the roundness of water (emptiness) that are all formed by the same *li* or water (emptiness), he seems to give latitude to differentiated and different *li*-s. This can be regarded as Yulgok's clarification and improvement of Zhu Xi's *liyi-fenshu* thesis.

Although for Zhu Xi, the maxim *liyi-fenshu* mainly aims to assert the pervasiveness of the one *li*, the above questions remained to be solved because the meaning of *fenshu* is "differentiation" and "difference." Yulgok seems to have clarified these problems by his four-word-thesis. In fact, there are some of Zhu Xi's words that can be regarded as meaning 'differentiation and difference.' For example:

[Someone] asked, "All things are dazzlingly many. Are they the same? *Li* is [initially] only this one [*li*]. The reason is the same, yet not the same after differentiated. King and subordinate have the Principle of king and subordinate; father and son, the Principle of father and subordinate."

問, "萬物粲然, 還同不同?" 曰, "理只是這一箇. 道理則同, 其分不同. 君臣有君臣之理, 父子有父子之理." (ZY 6:6)

In the above and elsewhere, Zhu Xi seems to admit that *li* is variously manifested and 'differentiated' although its origin is the same (Refer to ZY 9:53, 27:41, 27:46, 27:86, 98:93,

etc.). If the concept of differentiated *li*, as the practical force to handle *qi* and concreteness, is impossible, then *li*'s control over *qi* and the world could be impossible. And consequently, *li* could be a passive and imaginary entity. In this respect, it is hard to say that Yulgok has solved the ambiguity of Zhu Xi's metaphysics. Nevertheless, we can try to reconstruct his understanding of *liyi-fenshu*'s structure by raising the questions as follows:

Q-a) If *li* can be defined as the ultimate origin (*taiji*: *liyi*) and the control over all things; how and where can the unpredictability and irregularity (*cancibuqi* 參差不齊) of *qi* come about? – Is *qi* autonomously moving and changing? – Should we consider *li* to be the inductive conclusion from the observation of the various autonomous movement of *qi*, considering *li*'s control over *qi* to be referring to spontaneity (*ziran* 自然, self-so-ness) of *qi*? (If so, then where is *li* as the control over *qi*?)

Q-b) If irregular and diverse movements and states of *qi* are caused and controlled by *li*, then can we regard *li* as moving and driving *qi*? – Does not this violate the basic rule that *li* does not move? – How can non-real entity move and drive real entities? If *li* can be explained as the law of motion and stillness rather than something to move and drive *qi*, then should we regard that all states of *qi* are already designed and engraved in *li*?

The above questions enable us to summarize the problems of *li* and *qi* through the issue of *li*'s control and *qi*'s spontaneity. Yulgok holds, “*Qi* issues, and *li* rides on *qi*” (*kibal-yi-liseungji* 氣發而理乘之). He further explains, “The *yin* force is still, and the *yang* force is moving. [This is] just what *the framework spontaneously is* (*ki-ja-yi* 機自爾). There is no commander that makes them so.”¹³⁷ Given these words of Yulgok, he seems aware of the issue of *li*'s control and *qi*'s spontaneity. At this point, we may detect the flavor of Laozi's concept, *ziran* (spontaneity, self-so-ness, naturalness, etc.) in addition to the terms, *wuwei* (no-action) and *youwei* (action).

Zhu Xi seems to have been aware of and tries to solve the problems, continuing to develop his theory. However, his overall answers and suggestions seem to have affirmed all

¹³⁷ “陰靜陽動, 機自爾也, 非有使之者也。” (*Ibid.*)

contradictory positions at the same time.¹³⁸ The contradiction or inconsistency of Zhu Xi indicates that his accumulated explanations over his life time had become, in a sense, as puzzlingly “rich” as his intellectual background,¹³⁹ so as to make possible various interpretations. This is why later scholars continued to articulate their opinions about the problems, although they attempted to solve the problems within the framework that Zhu formulated. Yulgok’s philosophy of *li* and *qi* was brought about in this context, from the perspective of self-attainment, and it was conducive to the clear recognition of the issues of Zhu Xi’s metaphysics. In fact, such questions as *Q*-a) and *Q*-b) were clearly raised by scholars after Yulgok submitted the thesis of *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju*. Particularly Yim Seong-Ju 任聖周 (1711-1788, styled Nokmun 鹿門) and Ki Jeong-Jin 奇正鎭 (1798-1879, styled Nosa 蘆沙) expressed their opinions on *li* and *qi*, based on the paradigms, *Q*-a) and *Q*-b) respectively.¹⁴⁰

Another problem pertaining to *liyi-fenshu* and Yulgok’s re-setting of it is the problem of (human) nature (*xing*) as a form of *li* (*xing-ji-li* 性即理). If *li* is originally one and generates and permeates all things (*litong* 理通 and *geju yi taiji* 各具一太極), is (human) nature equal to the original *li* (*liyi*)? If equal, could human nature be the same as the nature of animals and plants because all natures should originate from the same one *li*? If not equal, human nature

¹³⁸ Han Won-Jin 韓元震, Kwak Shin-Whan 곽신환 trans., *ibid.*; Chen Lai, *ibid.*

¹³⁹ Refer to Hoyt C. Tillman, *Confucian discourse and Chu His’s Ascendancy* (University of Hawaii Press, 1992); Tillman, Reflection on Classifying “Confucian” Lineage: Reinventions of Tradition in Song China, John B. Duncan, et al. edit, *ibid.*; Chen Lai, *ibid.* Zhu Xi’s intellectual background cannot be reduced to only the so-called “Northern Song’s Five Masters (*beisong wuzi* 北宋五子).” In fact, the influence of Zhu Xi’s contemporaries can also be detected in his thought.

¹⁴⁰ Yim Seong-Ju’s position lays emphasis on *qi*, while Ki Jeong-Jin’s position highlights *li*. Refer to Kim Hyeong-Chan, *ibid.*; Kim Yong-Heon, Joseon yuhak-ui ki kaenyeom, *ibid.* Also Hankook sasangsa yeonkuso 한국사상사 연구소 ed., *Jaryo-wa haeseol hankook-ui cheolhak sasang* (*The Source Book of Korean Philosophy*) (Seoul: Yemoonseowon, 2001), pp. 583-591; *ibid.*, pp. 632-645.

should be a differentiated specific form of *li*, containing the inherent characteristics that are different from those of animals and plants. In order to evade the embarrassment of the identification of human and other things, one might have to insist that the *li* of a specific species should be a differentiated *li* (*fenshu zhi li*), which is different from other differentiated *li*-s. In this case, the moral characteristics of human being might have to be explicated from the very *qi* constitution of human being (*kikuk* 氣局 [Chi. *qiju*]) and the differentiated *li* as a result rather than the original one *li*. In addition, if *qi* makes possible the differences between humans and other creatures, we may be able to think that the difference between common people and sages originates from the subtle differences in *qi* constitution. (This position is reducible to *Q*-a) position.)

However, one might approach this problem differently. Although practical differences between human and other creatures exist, the original *li* is retained in everything; the very constitution of each species (*kikuk/qiju*) blocks the full manifestation of the original *li*; rather, differences in *qi* constitution are already engraved in the original *li*, being eventually reducible to the original *li*. Therefore, the identification of the original nature of human and other creatures does not embarrass us but enlighten us on the fundamental unity of all myriad things. Accordingly, we might be able to see the fundamental commonality between humans and other creatures, common people and sages. (This position is reducible to *Q*-b) position.)

Although the above positions seem to disagree with each other, it appears obvious that both of them touch on ethics. At this juncture, it needs to be reminded that the problem of *li* and *qi* was regarded as important because of its significant connection with the Neo-Confucian axiology and methodology for self-cultivation rather than purely metaphysical or scientific significance. In other words, as far as *li* is concerned with nature (*xing* 性) and heart-mind (*xin* 心), *li* cannot be considered as just a meta-physical entity beyond the phenomenal world; *qi* is also of importance to self-cultivation because *qi* is the crucial component of our body and

heart-mind.¹⁴¹ Against this backdrop of the importance of *li* and *qi* as the constitution of nature and heart-mind, and based on Zhu Xi's *liyi fenshu* thesis and Yulgok's clearer setting, we can construct possible questions to Neo-Confucian moral philosophy:

Q-c) If the nature (*xing* 性) of humans and all other creatures are the same as/originates from *li* as the ultimate origin, and *li* and nature can be claimed to be 'good' (*xing-ji-li*, *xingshan* 性善),¹⁴² are human nature and the nature of other things initially the same? And where and how do the immoral behaviors of human beings and the amorality of animals and plants come about? – Are immorality and amorality explained by *qi* only? If that is the case, we might have to consider differentiated *li*-s or *xing*-s in each species and individuals, which are conditioned by *qi*; otherwise, *li* would appear to wait for and passively rely on the unpredictable and irregular *qi* rather than give birth to and actively control it. If we think immorality and amorality are designed by/in *li*, then how can we maintain that *li* is good; is *li* good and evil at the same time (*li you shan 'e* 理有善惡)? (Further, how should we understand *li* as 'the absolute good' (*zhishan* 至善)? The "absolute good" and "moral good" – are they the same or different or simultaneously the same and different?)

Q-d) How can *li* be equated with the human nature as moral good, although *li* is defined as no-emotion and volition, etc.? If the still and not stirred state of the heart-mind before/without emotions and deliberation¹⁴³ can best help understand the original nature (*tianming zhi xing* 天命之性; the heavenly endowed nature) and the unifying *li* (*yili* 一理), and can be described as *zhong* 中 (centrality, mean, balance), then how should we account for the still and not stirred state in conjunction with the state after/with emotions and deliberation, which is either moral good or evil? Would the still and not stirred state be 'good' or 'both good and evil' or 'neither good nor evil'?

¹⁴¹ Accordingly, Neo-Confucian investigation of things (*gewu* 格物) and extension of knowledge (*zhizhi* 致知) should also be understood as in line with their eagerness to search for *li* as the meta-ethical ground for the 'ethical' understanding (*zhi* 知, knowledge) of the universe, society, and history. And *zhi* is expected to function as the compass of the practice (*xing* 行) of the 'self-cultivation and governing the people.'

¹⁴² *ZY* 4:49, 5:67, 5:70, 59:1, 59:9, etc.

It should be noted that Zhu Xi's theory on nature (*xing*) has two sources – the *Book of the Mean* and the *Mencius*; the former emphasizes the ultimate origin of "all" myriad things including human, while the latter emphasizes "human" nature's good. The problem is that nature (*xing*) in Zhu Xi is referring to both that of human and of animals and plants. This means that the natures of animals and plants can also be explained as being originated from/identified with *li*; however, they do not seem good as that of human, although human nature's good is legitimized by the origination from/identification with *li*. Also Zhou Dunyi's *Diagram on the Great Ultimate* and the *Explanation on the Diagram*, or *taijitu* (*shuo*) 太極圖 (說) highlight the import of the former. Refer to his *Zhongyong zhangju* 中庸章句 1 and *Mengzijizhu* 11:03. Also Zhu Xi himself was well aware of this rupture between the *Zhongyong* and the *Mengzi*. Refer to *Zhuxiji*, Vol.4, p. 1792; Vol.5, p. 2962, etc.; Han Won-Jin, Kwak Shin-Whan trans., *ibid.*, pp. 51-68; Chen Lai, *ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁴³ *Jiran budong* 寂然不動, *weifa* 未發 in contrast with *gan er suiting* 感而遂通, *yifa* 已發.

As a matter of fact, *Q-c*) and d) were of critical importance to the Debate on the Nature of Human and Things (*vin-mulseong dongyi ron/ren-wuxing tongyi lun* 人物性同異論), or Ho-Rak 湖洛 debate in the Yulgok school (1709 -)¹⁴⁴ as well as Neo-Confucianism in general. To sum up the questions from *Q-a*) and b) to *Q-c*) and d), they are all correlated and can be used to constitute various positions. Further, they have developed from the basic issues of Zhu Xi's learning such as: 1) what *li* and *qi* are¹⁴⁵ and how they are related; 2) how the differences between things take place despite being originated from the same universal *li*; 3) how *li* as the cosmic ultimate functions as the moral principle in human being, and how we can cultivate ourselves to perfect and live up to our endowed human nature and *li* as the ultimate source.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ The two sections in the Yulgok school – Chungcheng province's Hohak pa 湖學派 (Kwon Sang-Ha 權尚夏 (1641-1721, styled Suam 遂庵) and his students) and Seoul and Kyeonggi province's Nakhak pa 洛學派 (Kim Chang-Hyeop 金昌協 (1651-1708, styled Nongam 農巖) and his students) – started and unfolded this controversy. The debate was sparked off by Han Won-Jin 韓元震 (1682-1751) and Yi Kan 李柬 (1677-1727) in the Hohak pa. Han Won-Jin, based on his special attention to *qi*, held that human nature and animal (plant) nature were different, while Yi Kan maintained that all the natures were originally the same because Yi thought that they were all variations of the original *li*. The significance of this debate to the Joseon scholars cannot be exaggerated because the later part of the Joseon Neo-Confucian history was motivated and driven by this debate, although this was not only theme of the Joseon Neo-Confucianism. Refer to Yi Ae-Hee 이애희, Hankook sasangsa yeonkuso ed., *ibid.*, pp. 559-582; Peter Lee edit., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization* Vol. II (New York: Columbia University, 1996), pp. 251-263. And for the detailed study of this controversy, refer to Yun Sa-Soon 윤사순 et al., *Yinseong mulseong ron* 인성물성론 (Seoul: Hankilsa, 1994).

¹⁴⁵ As Kojima points out, and as the quotations in the above shows, between Zhu Xi and his disciples, there were no discussions that took such forms as 'What is *li*' and '*Li* is X.' Most discussions about *li* were done in the form of 'X is *li*' (X 即理). For example, "Nature is *li*" (*xing-ji-li* 性即理). In the case of Wang Yangming, as far as *li* was concerned, the form was the same, too. For instance, "The heart-mind is *li*" (*xin-ji-li* 心即理). (Refer to Kojima, *ibid.*) This may indicate that our modern philosophical inquiry about *li* and imposing Western metaphysical concepts on *li* may not have a fruitful result; however, this question form and search for the meaning of *li* are still important, although careless comparison and substitution with Western metaphysics are not justifiable, because depending on how each Neo-Confucian scholar defined the concept of *li*, his/her philosophical direction and feature was determined.

¹⁴⁶ Refer to Chen Lai, *ibid.*

The later unfolding of Neo-Confucianism may be explained as loaded with these questions that were yet to be solved. And Yulgok's *Sun-Eon* needs to be understood in this context.

In sum, Yulgok's philosophical inquiry on *li* and *qi* should be understood also in the general context of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. In fact, in order to explicate the differences between all myriad things, Zhu Xi advanced “*Li*-s in all things are the same, yet their *qi*-s are different (*litong qiyi* 理同氣異),” “*Li* can have partiality (*pian* 偏) and wholesomeness (*quan* 全) (*liyou pianquan* 理有偏全),” “*Qi*-s are the same, but *li*-s are different (*qitong liyi* 氣同理異),” etc. However, Yulgok's thesis of *litong-kikuk/litong-qiju* more clearly connects *liyi-fenshu* with *qi* as well as *li*, and synthesizes all the apparently contradictory theses advanced by Zhu Xi. On the basis of Yulgok's *litong-kikuk/litong-qiju* as a clarification of Zhu Xi's learning, the students of the Yulgok school could raise innovative questions to further develop Neo-Confucianism. Later scholars explored all the possible ethical implications of the philosophical argument on the nature of human and of other beings. It should be, however, noted that as we have seen, his clearer configuration of Zhu Xi's learning does not mean that his argument was clear enough to solve all the problems of Zhu Xi's system. Rather, his contribution to the history of Confucianism should be found in the re-appreciation and clarification of the problematic issues in Neo-Confucianism. It is my suggestion that his clarification might not have been possible without his pursuit of *jadeuk/zide* (self-attainment) – learning from ‘within’ which may be unique and liberal at first glance but universal after all because the ‘within’ was nothing but the fundamentals of Neo-Confucian learning, i.e., the heart-mind and nature as the refined reifications of *li* and *qi*.

4. Re-editing the *Laozi* and the Structure

The *Sun-Eon* of Yulgok has a unique feature in that it does not follow the usual form of commentaries on classics. Yulgok, with substantial omission, re-arranges the original text into forty chapters and comments on the new *Laozi* recension. In this section, I discuss why Yulgok re-arranges the *Laozi*, whether there is any structure underlying the *Sun-Eon*, and how compatible the structure is, if any, with his other works as well as Neo-Confucianism in general.

4-1) *The Laozi as a Confucian text?*

Yulgok's audacious handling of the text could have been regarded as unpardonable if the text had been a Confucian classic, though as a matter of fact, even Confucian classics had not been immune to various bold redactions. However, Yulgok's re-arrangement does not mean 'disrespect' to the *Laozi*. Rather, his purpose was to save the *Laozi* from a false charge. Yulgok reviews the *Laozi* as follows:

Generally, this book takes "no-action" (*muwi* 無爲 [Chi. *wuwei*]) as its chief tenet, but the effect [of no-action] is "nothing left undone" (*mubulwi* 無不爲 [Chi. *wubulwei*]). Hence, it does not indulge in "emptiness and nothingness" (*heomu* 虛無 [Chi. *xuwu*]). [However,] it discusses so much about the search for higher achievement and so often refers to the Sage; it frequently discusses the attainment of the higher level (*sangdal cheo* 上達處 [Chi. *shangda chu*]) but rarely discusses studying on the lower level (*hahak cheo* 下學處 [Chi. *xiaxue chu*]) [Confucian *Analects* 14:24, 37]. Accordingly, it is recommendable to intelligent scholars (*shangkeun ji sa* 上根之士 [Chi. *shanggen zhi si*]) as it is too difficult for people below the standard level to deal with. The meaning of [Laozi's] words, "mastering oneself [whereby] to restrain desire," "stillness [for] prudence," "humbleness [for] self-cultivation," and "benevolence/ plainness [for] dealing with people" are all truly endearing, meaningful, and useful to learners. We should not say, "Because the *Laozi* is not the book of the Sages we must not study it." 大抵, 此書以無爲爲宗, 而其用無不爲, 則亦非溺於虛無也。只是言多招詣動稱聖人; 論上達處多, 論下學處小。宜接上根之士, 而中人以下則難於下手矣。其言克己窒慾、靜重自守、謙虛自牧、慈簡臨民之義, 皆親切有味有益於學者。不可以謂非聖人之書, 而莫之省也。¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Epilogue by Yulgok, *SE*, p. 60. Yulgok does not title this passage as 'preface' or 'epilogue.' In terms of position, it is an epilogue.

Yulgok clearly holds that the *Laozi* is not about pedantic and hollow metaphysical speculation. However, its problem is that it is too abstruse for ordinary people to understand, so that the practical teachings for self-cultivation in the *Laozi* are likely to be ignored. The passage suggests that Yulgok re-arranged the *Laozi* in a bid to clarify and show the high-minded but practical meaning of the *Laozi*, which is certainly about the Way and self-cultivation that Neo-Confucians cannot but recognize as important, indeed.

To later scholars, Yulgok's re-editing of the *Laozi* seems to have been based on his criticism of the *Laozi* as well as his scholarly insight and generosity. It was Hong Gye-Hi (1703-1771), the very first publisher of the *Sun-Eon*, who understood Yulgok's re-editing as such:

Master Yulgok earlier selected two thousands and ninety eight words of Mr. Lao that were close to the Way of ours [i.e., Confucianism], and put together the *Sun-Eon* (the purified words of Laozi); he also commented on and added Korean suffixes (*ku'kyeol* 口訣)¹⁴⁸ to it. In the past, Han Yu 韓愈 [768-824, styled changli 昌黎 or tuizhi 退之] regarded Mr. Xun [i.e., Xunzi 荀子] as generally pure (*sun* 醇=純 [Chi. *chun*]) but slightly defective, and so he wanted to expunge something incompatible [with the orthodox Confucianism from the *Xunzi*] and affiliate [the *Xunzi*] to the Confucian sages' classics. Han said, "[The *Xunzi*] is [reflecting] the import of Confucius, too!" The reason why Master Yulgok edited this book and named it [*Sun-Eon*] was perhaps because he took the meaning of this [i.e., Han Yu's example].
栗谷先生 嘗鈔老氏之近於吾道者 二千九十有八言, 爲醇言一編, 仍爲之註解口訣。昔韓愈 以荀氏爲大醇而少疵, 欲削其不合者, 附於聖人之籍, 曰亦孔子之志歟! 先生編書命名之意 或取於此也。¹⁴⁹

Hong Gye-Hi likens Yulgok's re-editing of the *Laozi* to Han Yu's idea of re-editing the *Xunzi*.¹⁵⁰ Hong's surmise seems justifiable because Yulgok, for the title of the book, uses

¹⁴⁸ Korean postpositions by which to show the grammatical structure of Chinese sentences.

¹⁴⁹ Bal 跋 (Postscript by Hong Gye-Hi), *SE*, p. 61.

¹⁵⁰ Han Yu tried to justify his idea to re-edit the *Xunzi* by saying of the example of Confucius' editing the *Shijing* 詩經, the *Shujing* 書經, and the *Chunqiu* 春秋. ("孔子刪<詩>、<書>, 筆削<春秋>, 合於道者著之, 離於道者黜之, 故<詩>、<書>、<春秋> 無疵, 余欲削其不合者, 附於聖人之籍, 亦孔子之志歟!") Refer to "Duxun(zi)" 讀荀(子) (Reading the Xunzi), Qu Shouyuan 屈守元 and Chang Sichun 常思春 ed., *Hanyu quanji jiaozhu* 韓愈全集校注 (Chengdu: Sichun daxue, 1996), volume 5, p. 2717. Also, Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the Tang Search for Unity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 181.

the same word, *sun/chun* 醇 that Han Yu used; the literal meaning of the character is the refined and pure quality of liquor after making dregs settle. Moreover, given that Han Yu's evaluation of the *Xunzi* was quoted in Zhu Xi's commentarial work on the *Mencius*, which suggests that it was widely accepted by Neo-Confucians, Yulgok must have kept Han Yu's case in mind.¹⁵¹ Did Yulgok try to align the *Laozi* with Confucianism as Han Yu did to the *Xunzi*? No wonder, Hong Gye-Hi devotes the rest of his postscript to this issue. If Yulgok did try to emulate Han Yu, did he distort the meaning of the *Laozi*? Hong Gye-Hi writes:

I went through the text, [and I found that] generally three out of five [words of Laozi], that were contrary to the Confucian classics and principles, had been discarded, and so the words adopted [from the Laozi] were indeed not obstructive to calling [the book] "pure." Adopting and discarding [the words of Laozi] are fair as a balance and brilliant as a candle; [Yulgok's] commentary and explanation are also clear and just; [Yulgok] certainly lead them to converge on the Way of ours [i.e., Confucianism].
 啓禧攷本文，蓋去其反經悖理者五之三，余其取者誠不害乎謂之醇也。去取如衡稱燭照，註解又明白亭當，必援而歸之於吾道。¹⁵²

"Leading the *Laozi* and his commentary to converge on Confucianism" seems to best represent Hong's assessment of the *Sun-Eon*. It appears that Hong tries to sketch out the general feature of the *Sun-Eon* as a "Confucianized understanding of the *Laozi* (*yi'yu sheokno/yiru shilao* 以儒釋老)." However, his praise for the *Sun-Eon* is not uncritical, as he quotes the words of Song Yik-Pil (1534-1599, styled Wunjang 雲長 and Kubong 龜峯), one of the closest friends of Yulgok's, with approval:

When Yulgok edited this book, Kubong Song Yik-Pil held it back, saying [to Yulgok], "[The *Sun-Eon*] is not the original import of Laozi. I suspect that you are forcing it to

¹⁵¹ Refer to Zhu Xi, "Mengzi xushuo" 孟子序說 (Introduction to the *Mencius*), *Menzijizhu* 孟子集注, "[Han Yu] also said, 'Mencius is the purest among the pure; Xunzi and Yang Xiong are generally pure but slightly erroneous.'" (又曰，孟氏醇乎醇者也；荀與揚，大醇而小疵。) This sentence is originally from *Hanchangli ji* 韓昌黎集 (Collection of Han Yu's works). Refer to *Hanyuquanji jiaozhu*, volume 5, p. 2717 and also in Charles Hartman, *ibid.* For Zhu Xi's discussion with his disciple about this subject, see *ZY* 137:70. Zhu Xi thought that Han Yu's evaluation of Xunzi needed to be appreciated in contrast to that of (Chinese) Legalists, or *fajia* 法家.

¹⁵² Bal, *ibid.*, p. 61.

be identified [with Confucianism].” Song’s words are also straightforward and gratifying [as others’ praise about the book is].

龜峯宋先生止之曰,“非老子之本旨,有苟同之嫌.” 其言亦直截可喜.¹⁵³

This is against the general positive reception that the *Sun-Eon* enjoyed, which is reported by Hong:

The learned think that it would not have been possible if it had not been for Yulgok’s brilliance in “understanding words” (*ji’eon/zhiyan* 知言) [*Mencius* 3:2]. Heresies are contradictory to the Way of ours because of the impurities [in their teachings]. That which is not impure [in their teachings] is not without merit to take indeed. If their impurities are discarded, they would become pure.

識者以爲非先生知言之明,莫能爲也. 異端之所以倍於吾道者,以其駁也. 不駁者固不無可取; 去其駁則醇矣.¹⁵⁴

In the above, Yulgok’s success is said to lie in his ability to “understand words” (*jeon/zhiyan*),¹⁵⁵ which, in a Neo-Confucian context, means judiciousness based on understanding the fundamentals in learning.¹⁵⁶ It is also seen to be compatible with Confucius’ words, “Gentlemen do not recruit men [only] due to their words; nor dismiss [good] words due

¹⁵³ Bal, *ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁵⁴ Bal, *ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁵⁵ For the context of *jeon/zhiyan* in Early Confucianism, refer to Jiuan Heng, “Understanding Words and Knowing Men,” in Alan K.L. Chan ed., *Mencius – Context and Interpretation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 151-168.

¹⁵⁶ “The one who understands (knows) words exhausts the heart-mind (*xin*), knows nature (*xing*), and ultimately investigates the Principles (*li*) about all the words in the world, so that she/he can appreciate the reasons for right and wrong, gain and loss. Master Cheng said, “After heart-mind penetrates into the Way, one can discern right from wrong as she/he can compare light and heavy by a balance. What Mencius calls “understands words” is just the same as one can judge of the straight and crookedness of the people of low ranks only after one has become higher than them [, so as to be qualified to judge the people]. It also amount to saying that one cannot judge [the people] if one cannot avoid belonging to [the class] of the people.”

知言者, 盡心知性, 於凡天下之言無不有以究極其理, 而識其是非得失之所以然也. 程子曰, 心通乎道然後, 能辨是非, 如持權衡以較輕重. 孟子所謂知言是也. 又曰, 孟子知言, 正如人在堂上方能辨堂下人曲直. 若猶未免雜於堂下衆人之中, 則不能辨決矣. (*Mengzi jizhu* 3:2)

The literal meaning of “the people” and “the people of low ranks” is “people under a building” (*tangxia* 堂下, *tanxia ren* 堂下人, *tanxia zhongren* 堂下衆人). This means that people or low ranked officials who are supposed to stand below and look up to the higher officials in the court or the buildings for governance.

to the men (speakers).”¹⁵⁷ The conversation below between Zhu Xi and his disciple makes clear how this was understood in a Neo-Confucian context, in relation to Daoist philosophy:

Question: Master Cheng said, “Zhuangzi’s words that describe the substance of the Way have some good points. The chapter, “The spirit of the valley never dies” is the best in the *Laozi*. Zhuangzi says, “People who are very greedy are those born with shallow (poor) make-ups” [*Zhuangzi*, 6:1]. These words are the best [in the *Zhuangzi*].” And he [Master Cheng] also said, “Those who are not thoroughly sincere about propriety can penetrate into Zhuangzi.” If so, then the learning of Zhuangzi and Laozi is not regarded as a heresy [by Master Cheng], but is not lectured on [as well]?”

Answer: “The gentlemen do not select men [only] due to their words; nor dismiss [their good] words due to the men” If the words are worth taking, how can we not take them? For instance, the saying that people who are very greedy are those born with shallow (poor) make-ups is really proper, and so we cannot regard [the *Zhuangzi*] as hollow and vacuous talk and falsely accuse it.

Question: Since I am usually afraid that heresies might make me addicted to them, I have not read the *Zhuangzi*, the *Laozi*, and other works like them. I want to read them now. What do you think?

Answer: If there is something [for you] to take as the main [as the criteria for judgment], then what harm would reading them cause? The important point is that you are aware of how their meaning differs from the [teachings of] the Sages.

程先生謂,“莊生形容道體之語,儘有好處。老氏谷神不死一章最佳。莊子云,嗜慾深者,天機淺。此言最善。”又曰,“謹禮不透者,深看莊子。”然則莊老之學,未可以爲異端而不講之耶?”曰,“君子不以人廢言,言有可取,安得而不取之?如所謂‘嗜慾深者,天機淺’,此語甚的當,不可盡以爲虛無之論而妄訾之也。”謨曰,“平時慮爲異教所汨,未嘗讀莊老等書,今欲讀之,如何?”曰,“自有所主,則讀之何害?要在識其意所以異於聖人者如何爾。”(ZY 97:95)

The above quotation bears on the *Sun-Eon* in two ways. First, whereas Zhu Xi alluded to the legitimacy of studying Daoism, Yulgok brought that to full realization, which is significant in the history of both the Song-Ming orthodox learning and Joseon *Laozi* learning. Second, the legitimate possibility of studying Daoism in Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism is discussed in terms of the fundamentals of philosophical thought at the time, i.e., the Way (*Dao* and *li*) and human beings (*xin* and *xing*), which are of great importance to the concern for self-cultivation. Those key concepts function as the pivot on which Yulgok’s syncretic (Confucianized) understanding of the *Laozi* (and Buddhism) revolves.

¹⁵⁷ *Lunyu* (from Zhu Xi’s *Lunyu jizhu*) 15:22, “子曰, 君子不以言舉人; 不以人廢言。” Refer to D. C. Lau trans., *The Analects*, 15:23. (Lau’s paragraphing is different in 15:1; he divides the first paragraph into two, and therefore the subsequent paragraphs’ numbers are bigger by one than the otherwise.)

4-2) *The structure of the Sun-Eon, and the Great Learning*

At this juncture, the pertinent question to ask is “How does Yulgok show that the meaning of the *Laozi* is compatible with Confucianism?” An important clue can be found in Yulgok’s brief summary of the content of the *Sun-Eon*:

The first three chapters discuss the substance of the Way (*Doche* 道體 [Chi. *Daoti*]; i.e., the Way as the substance of the universe); the fourth chapter discusses the substance of the heart-mind (*shimche* 心體 [Chi. *xinti*], i.e., the heart-mind as the substance of the human being).

首三章言道體. 四章言心體.

The fifth generally discusses the beginning and end of ruling self and others; the sixth chapter takes diminishment (*son* 損 [Chi. *sun*]) and frugality (*saek* 嗇 [Chi. *se*]) as the essentials for ruling self and others; from the eighth to the twentieth, the meaning [of the sixth] is extended. The thirteenth chapter unfolds the idea of “three treasures” (*sambo* 三寶 [Chi. *sanbao*]) through the concept of frugality; the chapters from the fourteenth to the nineteenth explicate the meaning [of “three treasures”]. The twentieth talks about the problem of lightness and hastiness; the twenty first touches on the solution – purity and stillness (*cheongjeong* 清靜 [Chi. *qingjing*]); the twenty-second extends [the meaning of purity and stillness], saying the essentials for self-cultivation. The twenty-third and fourth talk about the effect of perfecting the Heavenly Way; the twenty-fifth discusses the effect of embodiment of the Way.

第五章 摠論治己治人之始終. 第六章 以損與嗇爲治己治人之要旨. 自第八章 止十二章 皆推廣其義. 第十三章 因嗇字, 而演出三寶之說. 自十四章 止十九章 申言其義. 二十章言輕躁之失. 二十一章言清靜之正. 二十二章推言用功之要. 二十三章四章申言其全天之效. 二十五章言體道之效.

Chapters twenty-six to thirty-five discuss the Way of governing the people (*chiyin* 治人 [Chi. *zhiren*]) and its effects. The thirty-sixth chapter tells the significance of ‘careful beginning and thoughtful ending’ and precaution before the occurrence.

二十六章 止三十五章 言治人之道及其功效.

The thirty-sixth chapter discusses the meaning that one should be prudent and careful from the beginning to the end so that one may prevent [something bad] from occurring. The thirty-seventh and eighth chapters discuss the truth that the Heavenly Way (*cheondo* 天道 [Chi. *tiandao*]) rewards for good and bad deeds with fortune and misfortune, and lessens what is full and adds to what is short. To end [the book,] the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters lament that [many] people cannot practice the Way.

三十六章言慎始慮終防於未然之義. 三十七章八章 言天道福善禍淫虧盈益謙之理. 三十九章四十章歎人之莫能行道以終之. (SE Ch. 40)

In order to help examine if there is an underlying structure to the *Sun-Eon*, based on the above quotation, I have made a table. As seen in the Table 1, the structure of the *Sun-Eon* is

not random at all; it seems to fully subscribe to a certain sequence or scheme, from self-cultivation, governing the people, to a call for the people to comply with the Way.

S.E.	the Laozi	Theme			
1	Chs. 42, 5	The Way (<i>Doche/Daoti</i> 道體)	21	Ch. 45	Solution by Purity and Stillness
2	Ch. 51		22	Ch. 56	Essential for Practice
3	Ch. 37		23	Ch. 55	Perfection of Heaven
4	Ch. 11	Heart-Mind (<i>shimche/xinti</i> 心體)	24	Ch. 50	Embodiment of the Way
			25	Chs. 34, 63	
5	Chs. 10, 12	General Remarks for Self-cultivation (<i>suki/xiuji</i> 修己)	26	Ch. 54	The Way of Governing the people and its effects (<i>chiyin/zhiren</i> 治人)
6	Ch. 48		27	Ch. 81	
7	Ch. 59	Diminishment (<i>son/sun</i> 損) and Frugality (<i>saek/se</i> 嗇)	28	Ch. 27	
8	Chs. 22, 24		29	Ch. 49	
9	Ch. 33		30	Ch. 29	
10	Ch. 44		31	Chs. 57, 58	
11	Ch. 47		32	Ch. 43	
12	Ch. 46		33	Ch. 30	
13	Ch. 67	Three treasures (<i>sambo/sanbao</i> 三寶) and the explanation	34	Ch. 31	
14	Chs. 76, 78		35	Ch. 60	
15	Ch. 9		36	Chs. 63, 64	Careful beginning and thoughtful ending, Precaution
16	Ch. 39		37	Chs. 72, 73	Moral function of the Way of Heaven
17	Chs. 8, 66		38	Chs. 77, 79	
18	Ch. 68		39	Ch. 70	Superficiality of the World
19	Chs. 41, 45		40	Ch. 53	
20	Chs. 23, 26	Problem of Lightness and Hastiness			

Table 1 Structure of the *Sun-Eon*

This sequence reflects both practical and theoretical concerns. In terms of practice, self-cultivation is prior to governing the people; in need of systematic construction of theory, Neo-Confucianism, particularly Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, focuses on the key concepts of *li* (*Dao*) and *qi*, *xin* and *xing*. This is why the first four chapters deal with the Way and the heart-mind.

For a further understanding of the structure of the *Sun-Eon*, we need to take a look at the table of contents of the *Gist of the Sagely Learning*, or *Seonghak jipyo* 聖學輯要, which is

one of the major works of Yulgok.¹⁵⁸ As seen in the Table 2, the *Seonghak jipyo* unfolds in the same sequence as that of the *Sun-Eon*. The first chapter ‘the Generals’ deals with the fundamental concepts; the next three chapters consist of self-cultivation and governing the people in order; the last part discusses the Way with reference to practical concerns both in the *Sun-Eon* and the *Seonghak jipyo*.

I	The Generals	
II	Self-Cultivation	Introduction – [Details: Resolution; Reverence; Investigation for principle; Sincerity; Correcting the endowed temper (Qi and Zhi); Nourishing Qi; Rectifying Heart-Mind; Mending one’s conduct; Broadening the virtue of mind; Supplementing the virtue by friends; Coming to full fruition] – Effect
III	Rectifying the family	Introduction – [Details: Filial piety and Reverence; Regulating the wife; Teaching the children; Affection for kith and kin; Gravity; Frugality] – Effect
IV	Politics	Introduction – [Details: Recruiting the worthies; Seeing the good in the subordinates; Knowing the timely tasks; Emulating the former kings; Observance of the admonition of Heaven; Establishing the ruling order; Stabilizing people by the right governance; Enlightening education] – Effect
V	Transmission of the Way of the sages and worthies	

Table 2 Structure of the *Seonghak jipyo*

Then, the next possible question is: which works of Neo-Confucianism influenced the *Seonghak jipyo*? First of all, we cannot but be reminded of the *Reflections on Things at Hand*, or the *Jinsi lu* 近思錄 because Yulgok as a sincere follower of Zhu Xi cherished and appreciated the anthology of Neo-Confucianism edited by Zhu.¹⁵⁹ We can constitute a table, based on Zhu Xi’s categorizing of the contents,¹⁶⁰ and Ye Cai’s 葉采 application – naming chapters and distributing them to Zhu Xi’s categories.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ *SHJY* 1, *CWYG*, kwon 9; *KTYJ* (V), p. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Yulgok wrote the *Keunsa rok kukyeol* 近思錄口訣, which is not extant; however, some of the contents are preserved in Kim Jang-Seng’s *Keunsa rok seokui* 近思錄釋疑. Refer to Wing-tsit Chan trans., *Reflections at Things at Hand* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 345.

¹⁶⁰ Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 1-2, “I believe that the essentials of the student’s search for the beginnings of things [the first chapter], exerting effort [2nd, 3rd, 4th], conducting himself [5th, 6th, 7th], and managing others [8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th], as well as the gist of understanding the heterodox schools [13th] and observing the sages and worthies [14th] can be seen in rough outline.” (My addition of the brackets, based on Ye Cai’s annotation)

I	Search for the beginnings of things i) On the substance of the Way
II	Exerting effort ii) The essential of learning, <u>iii) The investigation of things and the investigation of principle to the utmost</u> , <u>iv) Preserving the heart-mind and nourishing nature</u>
III	Conducting oneself v) Correcting mistakes, improving oneself, self-discipline, and returning to propriety, <u>iv) Regulating the family</u> , v) On serving or not serving in the government, advancing or withdrawal
IV	Managing Others vi) On the principle of governing the state and accepting or declining office, <u>vii) Systems and institutions</u> , <u>viii) Handling affairs</u> , <u>ix) Teaching</u> , <u>x) Correcting mistakes and the defects of the human mind</u>
V	Understanding the heterodoxies xi) Shifting the heterodoxical doctrines
VI	Observing the sages and worthies xii) On the dispositions of Sages and Worthies

Table 3 Structure of the *Jinsi lu*

On this basis, the *Shenghak jipyo* can be said to have been inspired by the *Jinsi lu* in terms of the general sequence – the fundamental concepts; self-cultivation; governing the people; heresies; and the transmission of the orthodoxy.¹⁶² However, can the common

(蓋凡學者所以求端[首卷論道體] 用力[二卷總論爲學大要, 三卷論致知, 四卷論存養] 處己[五卷論克己, 六卷論家道, 七卷論出處義利] 治人[八卷論治體, 九卷論治法, 十卷論政事, 十一卷論教學, 十二卷論警戒] 與夫所以辨異端[十三卷] 觀聖賢[十四卷]之大略.)
(Zhu Xi xu 朱熹序, in Ye Cai ed., *Jinsi lu Jijie* 近思錄集解 (Kanbun taiki 22, Toyamahusa, 1984))

The chapter numbers and names in the brackets are Ye Cai's distribution. Although Ye Cai's distribution is more or less arbitrary (Refer to Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 327-328), Ye's chapter names are not entirely arbitrary but almost same as the chapter names by Zhu Xi. (See ZY 105:24) However, Zhu denied the accurateness of each chapter name because each name cannot accurately and effectively summarize the contents which consist of so various subjects. (See ZY 105:25)

¹⁶¹ Although a couple of chapters (the underlined chapters in the table) are not suitable for Zhu Xi's categories, they can be regarded as acceptable in general. Refer to Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, p. 2 (footnote 7) and 328.

¹⁶² Interestingly, the problematic distribution of some chapters in the *Jinsi lu* is not seen in the case of the *Shenghak jipyo*. Rather, noteworthy is that Yulgok positions the chapter pertaining to the family as independent of and a bridge between self-cultivation and governing the people. It seems to be due to the basic concern of this work – admonition for the King; once kings fail to manage the (Royal) family, politics in the court can easily go wrong, subsequently. In fact, the contents of "Rectifying the Family" contain the historical examples of the conflicts and problems that occurred in the Royal house and court in China. However, in the table for demonstration of the contents, Yulgok combines 'Rectifying the family' with 'Politics' as governing the people and the effect of self-cultivation.

structure of the *Shenghak jipyo* and the *Jinsi lu* be traced back to a common source? The answer is found in the preface of the *Shenghak jipyo* and Zhu Xi's words as well:

The Four Books and the Six Classics (*sishu liujing* 四書六經) are both enlightening and available. If the Way is pursued from all the literature, Principle (*li* 理, the Way) cannot but be revealed. The concern is, however, that all the books are voluminous as the sea and [too] subtle, making it very difficult to gain the essentials. [Thus,] the precedent worthies singled out the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學) [from the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記)] and established the standard and model [for learning]. The numberless teachings and plans of the Sages and Worthies are not outside [the *Great Learning*]. Therefore, it [i.e., the *Great Learning*] is the means for gaining the essentials [for learning].

四書六經既明且備, 因文求道, 理無不現, 第患全書浩渺, 難以領要, 先正表章大學, 以立規模, 聖賢千謨萬訓, 皆不外此. 此是領要之法.¹⁶³

Someone asked about the *Jinsilu*. Zhu Xi replied, "After you have perused the *Great Learning*, move on to read the Confucian *Analects* and the *Mencius*. The *Jinsi lu* is difficult to read, too."

或問近思錄. 曰: "且熟看大學了, 卽讀語孟. 近思錄又難看." (ZY 105:28)

Yulgok clearly maintains that the *Great Learning* provides us with the framework of learning, and that we can re-arrange many Confucian classics with the guidance of the *Great Learning*. Zhu Xi's words have the same import as those of Yulgok. Yulgok goes on to say that the *Shenghak jipyo*'s sequence originates from and goes by the *Great Learning* – the three main cords (*sam kangryeong/san gangling* 三綱領) and the eight minor wires (*pal jomok/ba tiaomu* 八條目)¹⁶⁴; as Wing-tsit Chan takes the examples of Mao Xinglai 茅星來 (1678-1748) and others,¹⁶⁵ the *Jinsi lu* can be thought to reflect the objective of the *Great Learning* and, naturally, the structure as well.

¹⁶³ Seo 序 (Preface by Yulgok), *Shenghak jipyo*, CWYG, *kwon* 9; KTYJ (V), p. 8.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* It should be noted that Zhen Dexiu's *Daxueyanyi* 大學衍義 exerted a great influence in the Joseon Dynasty from the very beginning of the Dynasty, and later Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1421-1495)'s *Daxue yanyi bu* 大學衍義補 was imported from the Ming and published by the King Seong. Refer to Hwang Joon-Yon, *Yi Yulgok, Keu sam-ui moseup* 이율곡, 그 삶의 모습 (Seoul: Seoul daehakgyo chulpanbu, 2000), pp. 165-168.

¹⁶⁵ Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, p. 327.

As is shown in the *Great Learning*, self-cultivation¹⁶⁶ is “the root or foundation (*ben* 本),” and governing the people can be fully realized, as a result (*mo* 末, branches or end) of self-cultivation.¹⁶⁷ In Zhu Xi’s understanding, the first of the three main cords, “making the bright virtue light up” (*ming mingde* 明明德) means the enlightenment and realization of human nature (*xing*) or heart-mind (*xin*) endowed by the Heavenly Way¹⁶⁸; the second cord, “making people new” (*xinmin* 新民, helping others become enlightened of the bright virtue always in a refreshed way) cannot be put before the first cord because the second is not possible without the first; therefore, to know what the fundamentals – *Dao* (*li*), *xin*, and *xing* – should be prior to practicing them theoretically. This is the reason why the *Shenghak jipyo* and the *Jinsi lu* position the metaphysical discussion concerning the fundamental concepts in front.

Now it seems clear that the sequence of the *Shenghak jipyo* and the *Jinsi lu* is close to the framework of the *Great Learning*.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, the *Sun-Eon*’s structure is compatible with that of the *Great Learning*. (Refer to the Table 4.)

¹⁶⁶ “Self-cultivation” consists of such wires as investigating things (*gewu* 格物), extending knowledge (*zhizhi* 致知), making the will sincere (*chengyi* 誠意), rectifying the heart-mind (*zhengxin* 正心), and cultivating self (*xiushen* 修身). On the other hand, “Governing the people” consists of such wires as regulating the family (*jijia* 齊家), ordering the state (*zhiguo* 治國), and pacifying the world (*pingtianxia* 平天下).

¹⁶⁷ As to the root-branch idea (*benmo* 本末), refer to the *Daxue* (Zhu Xi’s edition (*Daxue zhangju* 大學章句)’s *jing* 經 part); the *Great Learning* in Wing-tsit Chan edit. and trans., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 84-94. Especially p. 87; Andrew Plaks trans., *Ta Hsüeh and Chung Yung (The Highest Order of Cultivation and On the Practice of the Mean)* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 6.

¹⁶⁸ Refer to Zhu Xi’s *Daxue zhangju* 大學章句. Particularly his commentary on the *jing* 經. However, Zhu does not clarify whether the bright virtue (*mingde*) is *xing* or *xin*. According to Chen Lai, Zhu seems to mean both; sometimes, *xing*; sometimes, *xin* (the original state of *xin*, *xinzhibenti* 心之本體). Refer to Chen, *ibid.*, pp. 290-293.

¹⁶⁹ This does not mean that each step of the eight minor wires is the necessary condition for the next step. Rather, all the steps are practiced at the same time; self-cultivation and governing the people are not separate matters. The eight steps and the two categories, self-cultivation and governing the people are an axiological order rather than a time order. The reason why the sequence cannot but be synchronically understood is because a diachronic reading of the eight steps can lead us to regarding the practice as practically unachievable – it is impossible

	The Reflections at things at hand	The Gist of the Sagely Learning	The <i>Sun-Eon</i>
Fundamentals	Search for the beginnings of things	The Generals	Chs. 01 – 04
Self-Cultivation	Exerting effort, Conducting oneself	Self-Cultivation	Chs. 05 – 25
Governing the people	Governing the people	Rectifying the family, Politics	Chs. 26 – 35
Perfection of Practice	Observing the sages and worthies	Transmission of the Way of the sages and worthies	Chs. 36 – 40

Table 4 Comparison of the structure of the three works

From the foregoing, we can conclude that Yulgok's re-editing and re-arranging of the *Laozi* has been conducted on the structure of the *Great Learning*, which is none other than the Neo-Confucian perspective on learning. In fact, Yulgok's words, "the precedent worthies singled out the *Great Learning* from the *Book of Rites* and established the standard and model for learning" compresses the history of the text and Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism as well as Yulgok's viewpoint on learning.¹⁷⁰ The relationship between the *Sun-Eon* and the *Great Learning* can also suggest that Yulgok's adopting and discarding the *Laozi* chapters may have been done out of a structural concern besides an ideological concern; he does not adopt 33 chapters (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 40, 52, 60, 62, 61, 65, 69, 71, 74, 75, 80) of the *Laozi*. Some of them may have been omitted because they are repetitions or may not fit in the structure. However, as will be discussed, some of omitted chapters are indirectly implicated in the text. (This will be elaborated again.)

to move forward to the next step after perfecting the former step. Refer to the *Daxue huowen* 大學或問 shang 上, 14th conversation; *Sishu huowen* 四書或問 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ For the history and issues of the *Great Learning* in Neo-Confucianism, refer to Bak Wan-Shik 박완식 edit. and trans., *Daehak Daehakhokmun Daehakgangeo* 대학 大學、대학혹문 大學或問、대학강어 大學講語 (Seoul: Yiron-kwa shilcheonsa, 1993); Kai-wing Chow, Between sanctioned change and fabrication: Confucian canon (*Ta-hsüeh*) and hermeneutical systems since the Sung times, Ching-I Tu edit., *Classics and Interpretations* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000), pp. 45-67; Yao Xinzong's Preface, Andrew Plaks, *ibid.*, and also Appendix III., *ibid.*, pp. 116-127.

4-3) *Han syncretism, Song synthesis, and the Laozi received by Yulgok*

Although we have found that the *Great Learning* is the underlying framework of the *Sun-Eon*, was Yulgok simply imposing a Confucian framework arbitrarily on the *Laozi*? To answer this question, it is necessary to identify the *Laozi* text and commentary used by Yulgok. The received text on which the *Sun-Eon* is based is the *Daodezhenjing Jijie*¹⁷¹ (Hereafter, the *Jijie*) by the Southern Song Daoist priest, Dong Sijing 董思靖 (?-?, flor.1246-1260, styled Guishan 圭山),¹⁷² and Yulgok made frequent use of Dong Sijing's commentary as well as other scholars' commentaries collected in the *Jije*. Indeed, although Yulgok cites Zhu Xi many times, he makes use of Dong's commentary even more frequently. Why? In order to understand Yulgok's hermeneutical orientation, I will examine briefly the *Laozi* commentarial tradition up to the Song.

The base text of the *Jijie* is obviously the (*Laozi Daode jing*) *Heshanggong zhangju* (老子道德經) 河上公章句¹⁷³ by the legendary Heshang gong 河上公 (the old man on the

¹⁷¹ Zhengtong Daozang 正統道藏 (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Reign), volume 12, pp. 821-860 (Wenwu 文物 reprint, 1988); fascicle (*juan*) 393-4, Shanghai reprint of the canon (1923-25). Hereafter the *Jije* for the *Daode zhenjing jijie* (both in the main text and footnote). I use the Wenwu edition, which is a reduced photocopy edition. Each page consists of three rows. In the case of citation, I will refer to the page number and the row (a/b/c). For instance, the *Jije*; **ZD** 12:821(b) means Zhengtong daozaog Wenwu edition, Book 12, page 821 (the middle row). As to other numbering systems and indexes, refer to Louis Komjathy, *Title Index to Daoist Collections* (Cambridge: Three pines press, 2002)

¹⁷² Xu (Preface), the *Jije*; **ZD** 12:821(a). The *Jije* was written in 1246, but published in 1257 by his junior Daoists. Refer to Ba (Postscript), *ibid.*; **ZD** 12:861(b),(c).

¹⁷³ In **ZD** 12, the title is *Daode zhenjing zhu* 道德真經注. The three editions excavated from Dunhuang 敦煌 have the name that I use in the above. For a brief introduction of various editions of *Heshang gong zhangju*, refer to Wang Ka 王卡 edit., *Laozi Daode jing Heshang gong zhangju* 老子道德經河上公章句 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), pp. 14-6; Lee Seok-Myeong 이석명 trans., *Noja dodeuk kyeong hasang gong jangku* 노자 도덕경 하상공장구 (Seoul: Somyeongchulpan, 2005), pp. 445-447. Wang Ka's edition is a representative modern recension. I will quote the original text from Wang Ka's edition. Hereafter, **LZZJ** for the *Laozi Daodejing Heshanggong Zhangju*.

riverside), a work dated to about 2nd century.¹⁷⁴ The important link between Heshang gong and Dong Sijing is not only the transmission of a specific received text but also the affinity in their thought. This is well captured in the latter's quotation of the *Heshang gong zhangju*'s chapter names and elaboration on them for his ending remark for every chapter.

As Isabelle Robinet points out, Song Daoism can be thought to originate from and retain much of the Han Daoist tradition,¹⁷⁵ regardless of its general claim to originality in its practice of internal alchemy (*neidan* 内丹). As Alan Chan clearly explains, Heshang gong combines his idea of self-cultivation with political insight in his commentary on the *Laozi*; his combination of self-cultivation and political ideal is consistent with the synthetic cultural trend of the Han, and for him, Confucian moral virtues are not necessarily contrary to the *Laozi*.¹⁷⁶ Robinet seems to concur with Chan when she takes the example of Heshang gong in order to explain the formation of a Daoist claim about the relationship between Daoists and society:

The goal of Taoism [Daoism] is often claimed to be that of simultaneously and in a single process bringing order to the individual and to the empire (expressed in the common axiom *zhishen zhiguo* “order one's person and govern the empire”). The sending to the emperor of Heshang gong's (fl.170 A.D.) commentary on the *Daodejing* (the holy book attributed to Laozi) is one of the most famous examples of practicing this double principle and inspired a school of Taoist [Daoist] commentators on this work.¹⁷⁷

In fact, the *Great Learning*, which is supposedly a work around the period from the Warring states period to the Han and was compiled into the *Book of Rites* in the Han, has a similar idea about the relationship between self-cultivation and governing the people. As Feng

¹⁷⁴ For a detailed introduction to the legend of Heshang gong and the formation of the **LZZJ**, refer to Alan K.L. Chan, *Two visions of the Way: a Study of the Wang Pi and the Ho-Shang Kung commentaries on the Lao-Tzu* (SUNY, 1991), pp. 89-118.

¹⁷⁵ Refer to Isabelle Robinet, Phyllis Brooks trans., *Taoism – Growth of a Religion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 228-229. Originally, *Histoire du Taoïsme des origines au XIV^e siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1992)

¹⁷⁶ Alan K.L. Chan, “A Tale of Two Commentaries,” in Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue ed., *Lao-tze and the Tao-te-ching* (SUNY, 1998), pp. 89-117.

¹⁷⁷ Isabelle Robinet, *ibid.*, p. 21.

Youlan and Lao Siguang have pointed out, the influence of the *Xunzi* and the *Mencius* are evident in the *Great Learning*, and they all maintain that self-cultivation is the root of governing the country.¹⁷⁸ Although the *Great Learning* may have originated from the philosophy of the Warring States period, it was compiled into the *Book of Rites* due to the relevance or suitability to the Han political and cultural environment. Besides the common ethos of the Han, to understand the interconnectedness of philosophical texts at the time, it should be noted that in the case of the *Xunzi*, the influence of the *Laozi*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Guanzi* – mainly in terms of their insight into the heart-mind and self-cultivation – is generally recognized;¹⁷⁹ in the *Mencius*, we need to take into consideration the mystical unity between Heaven and human being that can be likened to “quasi-Daoist *wuwei* language,” as Benjamin Schwartz points out.¹⁸⁰

Heshang gong’s commentary on the *Laozi* and the *Great Learning* not only emphasize the unity between self-cultivation and governing the people but also elaborate on how to cultivate self, i.e., inner cultivation and its ontological basis (*xin, xing, de, Dao, tian*), which is what the internal alchemical Daoists (Dong Sijing in this context) and the Song Neo-Confucians wanted to read into the *Laozi*.¹⁸¹ This point of convergence seems to constitute the Song dynasty’s synthetic trends including the so-called Neo-Confucian synthesis

¹⁷⁸ Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, *Daxue wei xunxue shuo* 大學為荀學說, *Gushi bian* 古史辨 Vol.4a, no.197 article, edited by Luo Genze 羅根澤 (Beijing: Pushi, 1930), pp. 175-183 (Originally from *Yanjingxuebao* 燕京學報, 7th period); Lao Siguang 勞思光, *Zhongguo Zhexueshi* 中國哲學史, volume 2, (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1981).

¹⁷⁹ Refer to Aaron Stanlnaker, Aspect of Xunzi’s Engagement with Early Daoism, *Philosophy East & West* Vol.53, No.1, 2003: 87-129, Esp. pp. 115-117.

¹⁸⁰ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of thought in ancient China* (Cambridge, London: The Belknap press of Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 257-90. Especially pp. 288-290. Also, for the conceptual metaphor of ‘no action (*wuwei*)’ in the *Mencius*, refer to Slingerland, *Effortless Action* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 131-173.

¹⁸¹ Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, *A history of Chinese philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), volume 2, pp. 409-413; Benjamin I. Schwartz, *ibid.*, p. 405.

and the syncretism (*Sanjiaoheyi* 三教合一, the unity of the three teachings) by Daoism (and Chan Buddhism) since mid Tang.¹⁸²

Now I will briefly introduce the political and cultural situation of the Song, in which the unity of self-cultivation and governing the people of Daoism and that of Confucianism interacted. Daoism of the Song flourished under the patronage of several emperors.¹⁸³ Thus, a check on the Song emperors' basic attitudes toward Daoism is important to understand Song Daoism in general and Dong Sijing in particular.

The first and second emperors, Taizu 太祖 (r. 960-976) and Taizong 太宗 (r. 977-997) adopted and promoted the Daoist ideal governance model (*Huanglaozhishu* 黃老之術, *wuwei zhi zhi* 無爲之治, *qingjing wuwei* 清靜無爲) to appease the people's uneasiness after the wars and turmoil of the period of the Five dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (*Wudai shiguo* 五代十國, 907-960).¹⁸⁴ In 960 (the reign period of *jianlong* 建隆), Taizu enshrined the statue of Laozi in the Jianlong 建隆 temple in the capital.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, he tried to remove what he considered to be unwholesome practices from Daoism:

¹⁸² Refer to Kubo Noritada 窪德忠, *Dokyosa* 道敎史, Choi Jun-Shik 최준식 trans., (Waegwan: Benedict Press, 1990), pp. 256-257. Originally *Dōkyōshi* 道敎史 (Tokyo: Sansen shupansa, 1977) Kubo raises a question to the usual demarcation of the Tang and the Song; he holds that the religious trend from the mid Tang to the Song was continuous in terms of syncretism and cross-fertilization.

¹⁸³ As seen in the main text, Taizu, Taizong, and then Zhenzong 真宗 (r.997-1022) and Huizong 徽宗 (r.1100-25) supported Daoism. Throughout the Northern and Southern Song, collecting Daoist classics and books had not been stopped. The Northern dynasty saw an early form of Daoist Canon (*Dasong tiangong baozang* 大宋天宮寶藏 (not extant), 1017) as well as a seven sectioned anthology of Daoism, *Yunjiqiqian* 雲笈七籤 edited by Zhang Junfang 張君房. Refer to Kubo Noritada, *ibid.*, pp. 270-273; Oyanagi Sigeta 小柳司氣太, *Nojangsasang-kwa dokyo* 老莊思想과 道敎, Kim Nak-Pil 김낙필 trans., (Seoul: Shiyinsa, 1988), pp. 285-288. Originally *Rōsōshisō to dōkyō* 老莊思想と道敎 (kansōyin, 1944); Isabell Robinet, *ibid.*, pp. 212-215.

¹⁸⁴ Li Renqun 李仁群, et al., *Daojia yu Zhongguozhexue* 道家與中國哲學 Songdai juan 宋代卷 (Beijing: Renmin da xue chubanshe, 2004), pp. 1-3, etc.

¹⁸⁵ Li You 李攸, *Songchaoshishi* 宋朝事實, volume 7; (Taibei: Xinxing shuju photoprint, 1983) (*Biji xiaoshuo daguan* 筆記小說大觀; 13:3), p. 1489.

“The Daoist school (*chongmiao zhi men* 冲妙之門) is rooted in [spiritual] purity (*qingjing* 清淨). [But] the degenerate customs quite corrupted the character of Daoism; some put on fraudently the costume of a Daoist priest and built Daoist temples in their houses. It should be punished and rectified so as to conform to the [right] admiration [for Daoism]. [Accordingly, I] prohibit all anomalous things practiced by [both] literati and commoners in the two capitals and all provinces.”

開寶 五年二月 詔曰, 冲妙之門, 清淨為本. 逮於末俗, 頗玷其風; 或竊服冠裳, 寓家道觀, 所宜懲革, 以副欽崇, 兩京諸州士庶奇詭者, 一切禁斷.¹⁸⁶

He also introduced the examination and registration system for the qualification of Daoist priests.¹⁸⁷ The decree clearly shows his idea that Daoist teaching should be based on the original import of the *Laozi*; the corrupt practices by religious Daoism including shamanic healing, prognostication, various alchemical experiments for longevity, etc. had to be rectified. However, not all Daoist practices were to be denied because as far as practice was based on purity, there would be no harm. An anecdote may suggest that he was interested in Daoist Yoga training and techniques and eventually understood the meaning of the *Laozi* as statecraft based on Daoist self-cultivation:

On the way back from the expedition of Taiyuan 太原 province, the emperor Taizu stopped by Zhending province to visit the Longxing temple. The Daoist priest Su Chengyin received the emperor's wagons. Su had snowy hair, and wore the priest cap decorated with stars. He was more than 90 years old, but his temperament and features were [still] valiant and prominent. So, the emperor asked him how long [he had practiced]. He said that he relied on a Daoist priest, Ding Shaowei in Bozhou and Chen Tuan of Huashan 華山.... The emperor asked, “What technique did you attain?” He answered, “I have attained the skill of the long whistle with harmonization (*changxiao yinhe zhifa*). Upon the order [of the emperor], he began a long whistle, which went from a clear (high) tone to a low tone, and went on for a long time. The emperor tried to stop him after a while, but [he did not stop because] he was in ecstasy. After some time (the duration of one meal), he stretched himself with yawned, but his [whistle] sound had not yet been stopped. The emperor wondered and asked about the key point for nurturing life. He answered, “Nurturing life for an emperor is different from mine. Laozi says, ‘I take no action and yet the people of themselves are transformed. I have no desires and yet the people of themselves become correct.’”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Li You, *ibid.*, pp. 1489-1490.

¹⁸⁷ Li You, *ibid.*, p. 1490.

¹⁸⁸ The *Laozi*, Ch.57. The second sentence is a combination of the original two sentences from the *Laozi*; “I love tranquility **and yet the people of themselves become correct**” and “**I have no desires** and yet the people of themselves become simple.” (我無為而民自化, 我好靜而民自正, 我無事而民自富, 我無欲而民自樸.)

No action and no desire, [then you can] condense the spirit (the mysterious function or vitality of the cosmos and body, *shen* 神) and [attain the essential vital force of] the great harmony (*taihe* 太和).” The reason why the Sage King Yao could reign and had the grand plan was because he could attain this Way.” [Taizu was moved by his words, and] eventually conferred the styled name, Master Yisu 頤素 (fostering primitive purity) on him.

太祖征太原還,至真定,幸龍興觀,道士蘇澈隱迎鑾駕,霜髮星冠,年九十許,氣貌翹竦。上因延問甚久,自言頃與亳州道士丁少微華山陳搏...上問曰,得何術?對曰,臣得長嘯引和之法。遂令長嘯,清入杳冥,移時不絕,上嘿久,低迷寢,殆食頃,方欠伸,其聲略不中斷。上大奇之,引問養生之要,隱對曰,帝王養生異於是,老子曰,我無爲而民自化,我無欲而民自正。無爲無欲,凝神太和。唐堯所以享國永圖,得此道也。遂賜號頤素先生。¹⁸⁹

The last words of Su Chengyin (“*No action, no desire, condensing the spirit, and the great harmony*”) remind us of Heshang gong’s commentary as well as the *Laozi* itself. In fact, to understand Su’s last remark, we need to look up to the *Heshanggong zhangju*; Heshang gong regards the spirits or vitality (*shen* 神) of our body¹⁹⁰ and the essential vital force (*jingqi* 精氣) in the pristine harmonious state (*taihe* 太和) as important for self-cultivation; without nourishing the spirits and preserving the pristine essential *qi*, one cannot embrace and secure the one, and governance would also be impossible. (Refer to the *LZZJ* Ch. 10, etc.) Su’s association of Daoist vision with the Confucian ideal Sage King Yao is suggestive of a syncretic perspective. In this context, we can understand how the *Laozi* and the *Great Learning* may be seen to have shared the same insight into the unity of self-cultivation and governing the people. In addition, “the great harmony” or the unity with the cosmos may recall the vision of the *Doctrine of the Mean*; that is, the ontological extension of the meaning of self-cultivation – “harmony and mean” (*zhonghe* 中和).

¹⁸⁹ (Song 宋) Jiang Shaowu 江少虞 edit. *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 宋朝事實類苑, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), pp. 546-547. Also quoted in (Ming 明) Jiao Hong 焦竑, *Laozi yi* 老子翼, juan 5, Appendix. (*Laozi yi/ Zhuangzi yi* 老子翼/ 莊子翼 (Kanbuntaigei 9), Toyamahusa, Shōwa 59 (1984))

¹⁹⁰ The term, *shen* is also used in such forms as *shenming* 神明 *wushen* 五神 *wuzang zhi shen* 五臟之神, *yangshen* 養神, and *yang jingshen* 養精神. Refer to *LZZJ*.

The second emperor Taizong's remarks about the *Laozi* seem to concur with the first emperor's. And he seems to have gone further on to clearly say that the *Laozi* is one of the best teachings for governing a country as well as oneself and to connect his understanding of the *Laozi* with the Confucian ideal of a cultured and moral government (*wenzhi* 文治), which has been called the typical character of the Song reign:

Upon reading the *Laozi*, the emperor said to his subordinates, “Reading Boyang’s 伯陽 [i.e., Laozi] five thousand words [i.e., the *Laozi*] is [really] beneficial; [the Way of] governing the people and that of governing the country are all in there. It exquisitely says, ‘As to those who are good, I also regard them as good; as to those who are not good, I regard them as good’ [*Laozi* Ch. 49]. These words mean that he excludes neither good nor evil. The craft of a person who rules him/herself and country should be like this. If he/she is always intolerant, then how would he/she be able to govern the world?”

上讀老子語侍臣曰，伯陽五千言，讀之甚有益，治身治國並在其內。至云，善者吾亦善之，不善者則不善之。此言善惡無不包容，治身治國者其術如是。若每事不能容納，則何以治天下哉！¹⁹¹

The emperor read the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經, a book on military strategy, and he lamented and said, “The craftiness and wiliness of this book is not enough to be used in guiding the will of villainous heroes into the right path.” When he discusses the *Laozi*, he says “Whenever I read ‘Weapons are not auspicious instruments and the Sages use them inevitably only as a last resort’ [*Laozi* Ch. 31], there was no occasion in which I (the emperor) did not repeat [these words of Laozi] three times, so those were taken as a rule and admonition. When kings defeat the enemy by force, they have to achieve governance by the virtue (*de* 德) of civilization (*wen* 文), eventually. Everyday, after leaving the court office, I have read books without stop [because I] want to take into consideration the success and failure of the former kings and execute [my enterprise] by perfectly balancing of loss and gain.” (My underlining)

上覽兵法陰符經歎曰，此詭詐奇巧不足以訓善姦雄之志也。至論道德則曰，朕每讀至兵者不祥之器，聖人不得已而用之，未嘗不三復以爲規戒，王者以武功克敵終須以文德治致治。朕每退朝不廢觀書，意欲酌先王成敗而行之以盡損益也。¹⁹²

The juxtaposition of “governing self” and “governing the country” (*zhishen zhiguo* 治身治國) in the first quotation is the typical language of Heshang gong. (Refer to the *LZZJ* Chs. 43, 64, and 65) Taizong seems to suggest that Laozi's trans-moral attitude is not the indifference to morality in general; rather, it should be an insight into the way of governing the

¹⁹¹ Li You 李攸, *ibid.*, p. 1311. Based on the original text of the *Laozi* and the context of the paragraph, 不善者則不善之 should be 不善者則善之.

¹⁹² Li You 李攸, *ibid.*, p. 1311. Also quoted in Jiao Hong, *ibid.*

world (*tianxia*). And in the second quotation, he seems to suggest that the *Laozi* should not be interpreted as a crafty and wily scheme like what the *Yinfu jing* teaches, although the *Yinfu jing* was traditionally regarded as inspired by the *Laozi*. In saying his attachment to the *Laozi* and the Way of the former Kings, he appears to mean that Laozi's philosophy reflects and provides an insight into history; in this vein, it can be harmonized with the Confucian ideal of moral politics. The first and second quotations seem to bolster each other in that the first invokes Heshang gong's phrase, "governing self and country," while the second eventually affirms the teaching of Laozi is not contrary to Confucianism. Taizong's attitude can be said to give much latitude to the *Laozi* and be regarded as reflecting the intellectual atmosphere at the time.¹⁹³

In addition to the support from the early kings, the rising nationalistic sentiment due to the invasion by the northern tribes (1126, the Jin 金 dynasty (1115-1234)) made possible a tremendous development of Daoism through the compilation of numerous books and records about Daoism. And in the Southern Song, a new Daoist method for self-cultivation (internal alchemy) added to its complex feature.¹⁹⁴ Of course, internal alchemical Daoists gave priority to the *Heshang gong zhangju* more than any other *Laozi* commentaries. And Isabelle Robinet

¹⁹³ The below conversation between Taizong and his subordinate shows that scholar-officials at the time had no hesitation to cite the *Laozi* as a teaching of ruling:

In 992, Taizong said to the ministers, "The Way of governing a country lies in the mean between leniency and vehemence; if [too] lenient, the government's order is not put into practice; if [too] vehement, people do not know how to conduct themselves. Can't the owner (ruler) of the world be really prudential?" Li Mengzheng 呂蒙正 said, "Laozi said 'ruling a big country is like cooking a small fish' because if [a small] fish is stirred, it can be scattered. These days, from inside and outside, have been delivered [many] letters, whose suggestions for reformation of the system are really many. Please, Your Highness, gradually give effect to the transformation [of the system of the country] into purity (*qingjing zhi hua* 清淨之化)." (Jiang Shaowu 江少虞, *Songchao shishi leiyuan*, p. 12.)

¹⁹⁴ Isabell Robinet, *ibid.*, pp. 212-229; Oyanagi Sigeta, *ibid.*, pp. 285-299.

points out, internal alchemistic Daoism had a “synthesizing” tendency to absorb Buddhism and Confucianism.¹⁹⁵

Keeping pace with the tendency at the time, Dong Sijing takes *Heshang gong zhangju* as the base text for his commentary on the *Laozi* and tries to embrace Neo-Confucian philosophy and their understanding of Daoism; Huizong, Sima Guang, Zhou Lianxi, Su Zhe, the two Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi,¹⁹⁶ et al are included in his *Jije*. Besides, noteworthy is that Dong incorporates Wang Bi’s viewpoint on the *Laozi* into his commentary. This is not only because he read Wang Bi’s commentary but also because Neo-Confucian metaphysics that Dong absorbed was based on philosophy of the *Zhouyi* and their understanding of the *Zhouyi* was already influenced by Wang Bi’s thought, whose thought was based on the *Laozi* and the *Zhouyi* at the same time.¹⁹⁷ Hence, one can say that Dong Sijing’s *Jije* is indeed a synthesis of

¹⁹⁵ Isabell Robinet, *ibid.*, pp. 217. She generalizes the characteristics of “interior alchemy” as follows:

1) A concern for training, both mental and physiological, with the mental aspect often tending to predominate; 2) A synthesizing tendency bringing together various Taoist elements (breathing exercises, visualization, and alchemy), certain Buddhist speculations and methods (speculations on the *wu* and the *you*, Chan *gong’an* – the koans of Japanese *zen*), and references to Confucian texts; 3) A systematized use of the trigrams and hexagrams of the Book of Changes already used metaphorically in laboratory alchemy and ritual; and 4. References to chemical practices, of a purely metaphorical nature, following an interiorized interpretation... (My underlining)

Of particular mention are 1, 2, and 3; these characteristics seem to be all contained in the *Jije* of Dong Sijing. In fact, 3 is not exactly the case because Dong obviously invokes philosophy of the *Zhouyi* but does not use the symbols in the *Jiejie*. However, 1 and 2 seem obvious; Dong’s interest in internal alchemical training is apparently identified here and there.

¹⁹⁶ Until when Dong Sijing completed the *Jije* (1246), such editions as the *Record of Master Zhu’s sayings* (*Zhuzi yulu* 朱子語錄, 1215), the *Classified Record of Master Zhu* (*Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, 1219, 1220), and the *Sequel of the Classified Record of Master Zhu* (*Xu zhuzi yulei* 續朱子語類, 1238) had been published. Refer to (Song) Li Jingde 黎靖德 ed., *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), volume 1 (Prefaces and Postscripts). And *Zhuzi wenji* 朱子文集 (Collection of Zhu Xi’s writing) has been used by Dong.

¹⁹⁷ For Wang Bi’s association of the *Laozi* with the *Zhouyi*, refer to Alan K.L. Chan, *Two visions of the Way*, pp. 29-32. Wang Bi’s study on the *Zhouyi* together with the *Attached Verbalization* (*Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳) exerted a great influence on Neo-Confucian study of the

the representative Laozi commentaries and philosophies at the time. This is why Yulgok uses the *Jijie* as the resource.

Now we can understand why and how the *Great Learning* and the *Laozi* were merged in the *Sun-Eon*:

- 1) Yulgok's Laozi was basically Heshang gong's *Laozi*, which shared the similar ideal with the *Great Learning*; both works reflected the political and cultural ethos of the Han period;
- 2) The *Zhangju* still strongly influenced the Song culture because of the socio-political instability and the growth of Daoism; Heshang gong's vision is transmitted to Yulgok through Dong Sijing;
- 3) The spirit of the *Great Learning* is already engraved in Yulgok as a successor of Song Learning (*songxue* 宋學). And when Yulgok received the *Laozi* through Heshang gong's and Dong's vision, he could have found out the affinity between the *Great Learning* and the *Laozi* in terms of their ideal of learning, i.e., the unity of self-cultivation and governing the people.

Also it needs to be mentioned that as will be shown in the following chapter, Yulgok's understanding of the *Laozi* is influenced by both Heshang gong and Wang Bi because the *Jijie* contains and reflects Wang Bi's commentaries and ideas as well as Heshang gong's and the *Sun-Eon* contains various Neo-Confucians' comments on the *Laozi* and the *Zhouyi*, which Wang Bi's metaphysical idea's influence already underlies.

Book of Changes. See Kidder Smith, Jr., Peter K. Bol, et al. *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.7-25.

III. Yulgok on the *Laozi*:

Principle, Self-cultivation, and Confucian Sages

1. *The Way and Principle*

In the previous chapters, the importance of the concept, *li*, has been emphasized. This fundamental concept in Neo-Confucianism is pivotal to Yulgok's interpretation of the *Laozi* too, as will be presently discussed. The *li* concept has two aspects; 1) *li* in metaphysics (*bonche/benti* 本體); 2) *li* in the change of *qi*, i.e., the generation of concrete things (*yuhaeng/liuxing* 流行). While both categories constitute the concept of *li*, they also bring out a contradiction. In the former category, *li* is understood as static, regular, moral, and controlling *qi* and all myriad things, whereas in the latter category, *li* can hardly be regarded as controlling all myriad things effectively as *qi* is moving, irregular, and both moral and immoral.¹⁹⁸ Against this backdrop, this chapter will discuss how the *li* and *qi* concepts function in the *Sun-Eon*.

1-1) *Dao, taiji, and li*

The first chapter of the *Sun-Eon* begins with an analysis of Chs.5 and 42 of the *Laozi*:

1-[1] Do/Dao gives birth to the One; the One gives birth to the Two; the Two give birth to the Three; the Three give births to all myriad things, 1-[2] and, therefore, the space between Heaven and Earth is like a pair of bellows and a pipe. 1-[3] Vacuous but inexhaustible [is it] and [the more] it moves, the more it produces. 1-[4] All myriad things carry the negative force (yeum/yin 陰, shade) on the back and embrace the positive force (yang 陽, light), and they achieve harmony (balance, hwa/he 和) by the ki/qi 氣 (breath, force) of vacancy (chungki/chongqi 沖氣).

道生一하고 一生二하고 二生三하고 三生萬物하니 天地之間이 其猶橐籥乎인더.
虛而不屈하며 動而愈出이니라. 萬物이 負陰而抱陽하고 沖氣以爲和이니라.

¹⁹⁸ Yulgok's *litong-kikuk/litong-qiju* 理通氣局 thesis was suggested to solve this contradiction regarding the *li* and *qi* concepts. "The thesis, *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* should be spoken of in terms of the origin (*bonche/benti* 本體), and the changes (*yuhaeng/liuxing* 流行) cannot be explained regardless of the origin." (理通氣局, 要自本體上說出, 亦不可離了本體, 別求流行也.) ("Yeo Seong Ho-Won" 與成浩原, Seo (2), *CWYG*, kwon 10; *KTYJ* (III), p. 98) Refer to II. Yulgok. *Self-attainment as the Pivot for learning*.

1-[1] Master Zhu 朱 [i.e., Zhuzi 朱子] said, “*Do/Dao* is the Great Ultimate (*taekeuk/taiji*) of the *Book of Changes* (Yi 易; change; the *Zhouyi*); one is an odd number (*ki/qi* 奇, —) of the positive force, *yang*; two is an even number (*wu/ou* 耦, --) of the negative force, *yeum/yin*; three is the sum of the odd number and the even number. The saying, ‘two give birth three’ is like what is said by ‘one together with two become three.’ The words, ‘three give births to all myriad things’ mean that the odd number and the even number cooperate so that all myriad things can come into being.”

朱子曰,“道即易之太極,一乃陽之奇,二乃陰之耦,三乃奇耦之積。其曰二生三 猶所謂二與一爲三也。其曰三生萬物,即奇耦合而萬物生也。”

1-[2] Mr. Dong said, “*Tak/tuo* 橐 means a bellows; *yak/yue* 籥 means a pipe¹⁹⁹; both are things that can receive breath (force, *ki/qi* 氣) and blow out wind. [The truth] that in the in-between space of Heaven and Earth, the two [kinds of] forces come and go, contract and expand is likened to [the fact] that these things [i.e., bellows and pipe] have no core and are vacuous, and thereby able to receive and respond to [things coming in] but do not keep them in store.”

董氏曰,橐,韠也。籥,管也。能受氣、鼓風之物。天地之間,二氣往來、屈伸,猶此物之無心、虛而能受,應而不藏也。

1-[3] We see no shape [in the space between Heaven and Earth], but no thing does not receive (*sul/shou* 受) its shape [from it]. [It] moves and produces and produces (*shengsheng* 生生), and the more it produces, the more inexhaustible it becomes. Zhuzi said, “[If it] were not to receive anything [coming in], [it] would be exhaustible, albeit, vacuous; [if it] were not to respond (*yeung/ying* 應) to anything [coming in], [it] would not be able to produce, even though it moves.”

無形可見,而無一物不受形焉。動而生生。愈生而愈無窮焉。朱子曰,有一物之不受,則虛而屈矣;有一物之不應,是動而不出矣。

1-[4] Mr. Dong said, “Generally, the kinds of animals have the backs still in the behind; [the backs of them] belong to the negative force and stillness (*yeumjeong/yinjing* 陰靜); [animals] have a mouth, a nose, ears, and the eye in the front; [Those things in the front] belong to the positive force and movement; the kinds of plants turn the back on coldness and the face toward warmth. Accordingly, it is said that [all myriad things] carry the negative force on the backs and embrace the positive force. And the breath (force) of vacancy operates in the in-between space [of the back and the front of body]. Wengong 溫公 [i.e., Sima Guang 司馬光, 1019-1086] said, “No thing [in the world] does not take *yin* and *yang* forces as the body (*che/ti* 體) and emptiness (non-being) and harmony (*chunghwa/chonghe* 沖和) as the function (*yong*).”

董氏曰,凡動物之類則背止於後,陰靜之屬也。口、鼻、耳、目居前,陽動之屬也。植物則背寒向暖。故曰,負陰而抱陽,而沖氣則運乎其間也。溫公曰,莫不以陰陽爲體,以沖和爲用。

The first point to note is that Yulgok re-arranges the *Laozi* text in the following sequence: Ch. 42 (1-[1]), Ch. 5 (1-[2]), Ch. 5 (1-[3]), and Ch. 42 (1-[4]) again. In fact, this

¹⁹⁹ Dong Sijing obviously adopts Wang Bi's definition of *tuo* and *yue* as a pair of bellows (*paituo* 排橐) and a musical pipe (*yueyue* 樂籥), respectively; *WBJJ* p. 14, “橐,排橐也。籥,樂籥也。” On the other hand, Heshang gong regards both as a musical instrument that emits the *qi* of sound (*shengqi* 聲氣). (*LZZJ* Ch.5)

re-arrangement is reminiscent of Zhou Dunyi's work, *Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* (*Taiji tu shuo* 太極圖說)²⁰⁰ and the *Xici zhuan* (Attached Verbalization) of the *Zhouyi*.²⁰¹ These three texts can be juxtaposed as follows:

The Sun-Eon Ch.1	An Explanation of the Taiji Diagram	Xici zhuan in the Zhouyi A:11, B:6, etc.
<i>Dao</i> gives birth to the One; the One gives birth to the Two; the Two give birth to the Three; the Three give births to all myriad things. (Ch.42)	The Ultimate of Non-Being and yet the Great Ultimate (<i>Taiji</i> 太極)! ...The distinction between <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i> takes place, and the two modes are established. By the transformation of <i>yang</i> and its union with <i>yin</i> , Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth arise. 無極而太極...分陰分陽, 兩儀立焉. 陽變陰合, 而生水、火、木、金、土.	In the Changes, there is the Great Ultimate, which produces the Two modes; the Two modes produce the four images; the four images produce the eight trigrams; the trigrams produce auspiciousness and ominousness; auspiciousness and ominousness produce the great business. (A:11) 易有太極, 是生兩儀. 兩儀生四象, 四象生八卦, 八卦生吉凶, 吉凶生大業.
Therefore, the space between Heaven and Earth is like a bellows and pipe. (Ch.5)	... Heaven constitutes maleness, and Earth constitutes femaleness (<i>Xici zhuan</i> A:1) 乾道成男, 坤道成女.	Heaven constitutes maleness, and Earth constitutes femaleness (A:1) 乾道成男, 坤道成女.
Vacuous but inexhaustible is it and the more it moves, the more it produces. (Ch.5)	...The Five phases are traced back to <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i> ; <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i> to the Great Ultimate; the Great Ultimate to the Ultimate of Non-Being... The interaction of these two material forces engenders and transforms all myriad things. All myriad things produce and produce again, resulting in a ceaseless transformation... 五行一陰陽也, 陰陽一太極也, 太極本無極也...乾道成男, 坤道成女, 二氣交感, 化生萬物. 萬物生生, 而變化無窮焉...	Confucius said, " <i>Qian</i> (Heaven) and <i>Kun</i> (Earth) are the gate of the <i>Zhouyi</i> (or changes)! <i>Qian</i> is that which has <i>yang</i> force; <i>Kun</i> is that which has <i>yin</i> force. (B:6) 子曰, "乾坤, 其易之門邪! 乾, 陽物也; 坤, 陰物也."
All myriad things carry <i>yin</i> on the back and embrace <i>yang</i> , and they achieve harmony by the <i>qi</i> of vacancy. (Ch.42)		Heaven and Earth intermingle, fermenting into ten thousand things; male and female tangle their essence, bringing into being ten thousand things. 天地絪縕, 萬物化醇; 男女構精, 萬物化生. (B:5)

²⁰⁰ This is the first work in the *Reflection of things at hands* (*Jinsi lu*) and the *Great compendium for Neo-Confucianism* (*Xingli daquan* 性理大全, Ming). Translation is adapted from Wing-tist Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese philosophy*, p. 463.

²⁰¹ For translation of the *Book of Changes*, I consulted James Legge's translation, *THE YI KING* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1882) and its brand-new edition by Raymond Van Over, *I CHING* (NY and Scarborough: New American Library, 1971); Richard John Lynn trans., *the Classic of Changes – a new translation of the I Ching as interpreted by Wang Bi* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1994).

The above juxtaposition reveals and highlights the commonality of the *Laozi*, the *Xici zhuan*, and the *Taiji tu shuo*, which can be summarized as follows: The One absolute truth produces (contains) two contradictory forces (aspects); the Two, born from the One, are represented by such binary concepts as *yang* and *yeum/yin*, Heaven (*cheon/tian* 天, *keon/qian* 乾) and Earth (*ji/di* 地, *kon/kun* 坤), male (*nam/nan* 男) and female (*nyeo/nü* 女), and the like; the Two factors intermingle with each other and bring forth diversity. However, the diversity is engraved with and reducible to the One absolute truth, which is the key to the perfect balance or harmony of everything.

Yulgok's re-arrangement of the *Laozi* text can be interpreted to emphasize this commonality between the philosophy of *Laozi* and Neo-Confucianism. Zhu Xi treats Zhou Dunyi's work as a seminal work by putting it at the beginning of the *Jinsi lu*, and the *Sun-Eon* also puts at its first chapter the re-arranged text reminiscent of Zhou and the *Xici zhuan*. This interpretation seems to be supported by the fact that the structure of the *Sun-Eon* has an affinity with the *Jinsi lu*.²⁰²

The comment on 1-[1] is a quotation from Zhu Xi, who explains the *Laozi* from the perspective of the philosophy of the *Zhouyi*. Zhu Xi considers *Dao* in the *Laozi* to be comparable with the Neo-Confucian *taiji*. Once this is done, based on Neo-Confucian teaching, further extension is possible. *Dao* of the *Laozi* can be identified with *li* of Neo-Confucianism,

²⁰² However, Zhu Xi himself did not want to compare Zhou Dunyi's thought with Daoism. In this context, Yulgok's text re-arrangement for a comparison between the *Laozi* and Neo-Confucianism can be regarded as bold enough to go against Zhu Xi. Zhu's viewpoint on this is well shown in the controversy between Zhu Xi and Lu Jiuyan 陸九淵 (1139-1192) and his brothers. The initial issue was about "the Great Ultimate" and "Non-Ultimate." Lu doubted the authorship of the *Taiji tu shuo* as well as the *Taiji tu*, suspecting that Non-Ultimate is a Daoist concept. But Zhu Xi maintained that the first phrase expresses "the substance of the Way" (*Daoti* 道體) and the term, "Non-Ultimate" prevents people from regarding the Great Ultimate as a concrete thing, while the Great Ultimate prevents readers from regarding Non-Ultimate as a vacuum. ("Da Lu Zijing" 答陸子靜 (The fourth reply to Lu Zijing), *Zhuxi ji*, volume 3, p. 1576.)

for Zhu Xi holds, “*Taiji* refers to none other than the term, *li*” (太極只是一箇理字, *ZY* 1:4).²⁰³

Indeed Yulgok is well aware of this argument as Ch. 2 of the *Sun-Eon* attests:

Dao gives births [to all things]; de [of all things] nourish [themselves]; things take shapes; situations bring [all things] to completion. Therefore, no thing does not pay respect to Dao and cherish de. [The so-called] respectability of Dao and nobleness of de are, generally, not what are dubbed [by someone else] but what are constantly self-so (ziran: naturalness, spontaneity).

道生之하고 德畜之하고 物形之하고 勢成之라. 是以萬物이 莫不尊道而貴德하나니 道之尊과 德之貴는 夫莫之命而常自然이니라.

Dao is the Heavenly Dao and that by which (suoyi 所以) gives birth to things; de are the shapes and bodies of Dao, which is called ‘Nature’ (seong/xing 性). Without Dao, human and things would not have anything by which to take shape; without de, [they] would not have anything by which to follow li and to nourish themselves. Accordingly, it is said that *Dao* gives birth; *de* nourishes. Taking shapes in things and co-origination in situations are all based on *Dao* and *de*. Consequently, *Dao* and *de* are most respectable and noble.

道即天道, 所以生物者也. 德則道之形體也, 乃所謂性也. 人物 非道 則無以資生, 非德 則無以循理以自養. 故曰道生德畜也. 物之成形, 勢之相因, 皆本於道德, 故道德最爲尊貴也. (*SE* Ch. 2)

Yulgok holds that *Dao* in the *Laozi* is like the “Heavenly *Dao*” in Confucianism. This means that *Dao* in the *Laozi* is taken to be the same as Neo-Confucian *li*. In Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, “Heaven is *li*” (天者理也).²⁰⁴ Furthermore, Yulgok obviously introduces the concept of *li* as an alternative term for *Dao*, as he says, “Without *de*, [they] would not have

²⁰³ “*Dao* refers to the universal operation of *li*, while *taiji* refers to the greatest extent of *li*.” (道是以理之通行者而言; 太極是以理之極至者而言)(Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159-1223, styled Beixi 北溪), Wing-tist Chan trans., *Neo-Confucian Terms Explained* (The *Pei-his tzu-i* 北溪字義) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 116.) Chen Chun’s explanation here seems to have been influenced from *ZY* 6:3, 6:5, etc. And Zhu Xi explains the difference between the Way and Principle: “*Dao* is the universal name [for the reality]; *li* contains detailed particular contents.” (道是統名, 理是細目, *ZY* 6:2) This seems to a rephrasing of the two Cheng brothers’ words, “When [the Changes (*yi* 易)] are scattered over *li*-s, there are brought out ten thousand differences; when the Changes are collected on *Dao*, there is no difference.” (“散之在理, 則有萬物; 統之在道, 則無二致,” “*Yixu*” 易序 (Preface to the *Zhouyi*), *Ercheng ji* 二程集 (Taipei: Hanjing wenhua, 1983), volume 1, p. 667.)

²⁰⁴ This is a famous saying by Cheng Hao. And Cheng Hao and Zhu Xi liked to use the word, the “Heavenly principle” (*tianli* 天理). For various usages of *tian*, refer to Zhang Dainian 張岱年, Edmund Ryden trans., *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2002), pp. 3-11. Originally, *Zhongguo gudianzhexue gainianfanchou yaolun* 中國古典哲學概念範疇要論 (Beijing: Shehui kexueyuan, 1987).

anything by which to follow *li* and to nourish themselves”; Yulgok thinks that as *de* is translated into the Neo-Confucian concept of *xing* (nature), *Dao* is translated into the origin of *xing*, i.e., *li*. Indeed Yulgok’s quotation from Zhu Xi (1-[1]) and application of Neo-Confucian *li* and *xing* to *Dao* and *de* (SE Ch. 2) seem to serve the purpose – justifying his comparative project between the *Laozi* and Neo-Confucianism. However, Yulgok’s quotations from Zhu Xi are not blind repetitions; as presently seen, Yulgok strategically selects what to cite and what not to cite from Zhu Xi’s voluminous writings. This relates to Yulgok’s clarification of Zhu Xi’s thought. In the *Sun-Eon*, Yulgok’s understanding of the concept of “One” is a case in question.

In 1-[1], Zhu Xi explains the One as an “odd number” standing for *yang* force (*qi*) rather than *taiji* and *Dao*. But, based on *Laozi* Ch. 39, “Attaining the One” (*deyi* 得一) and Chs.10 and 22, “Embracing the One” (*baoyi* 抱一), the One should be understood as *taiji* or *Dao*, rather than an “odd number” (*yang* 一). This fits more with the philosophical structure of Yulgok’s re-arranged text as well as the *Laozi*, the *Xici zhuan* (“*Taiji* [one] → *liangyi* 兩儀 [two; *yin* and *yang*]”), and Zhou Dunyi’s *Taiji tu shuo* (“*Taiji* [one] → *fenyin fenyang liangyi li*” 分陰分陽, 兩儀立 [two]). Indeed, in other chapters of the *Sun-Eon*, Yulgok clearly shows his understanding of the One that is different from Zhu Xi in 1-[1]. Yulgok takes the One as *Dao* and *taiji* rather than an odd number, as seen in “*Dao* is just the One. If we have attained the One, we cannot fail to attain anything” (道一而已, 得一則無不得矣.), “Concentrating on the One” (*juyi/zhuyi* 主一), and “Embracing the One (*po-yil/baoyi* 抱一) is to fully internalize this *Dao*.” (抱一, 則全體是道.) (SE Ch. 8). On the other hand, as to the concept of the Two (1-[2]), Yulgok quotes from Dong Sijing’s commentary, “Between Heaven and Earth the Two [kinds of] forces (*erqi* 二氣) come and go, contract and expand.” (天地之間, 二氣往來屈伸). What Dong means by the Two forces should be *yin* and *yang*, given that Heaven and Earth are

usually regarded as the archetypical entities standing for *yang* and *yin*, respectively (*Xici zhuan* B:6) and, further, here described as providing the arena where the two forces interact.²⁰⁵

Based on his understanding of the One, Yulgok selectively cites Zhu Xi. In this instance, of particular interest is Zhu's original text that is appropriated for the comment on 1-[1]. Yulgok did not quote the complete paragraph of Zhu Xi from Dong Sijing's *Jijie*. The omitted paragraph reads:

If we regard the One directly as *taiji*, it would not be allowable to say “*Dao* produces the One.” The words of Laozi are exactly the same as those of the *Liezi* 列子, “[The absolute truth for] the Changes (*yi* 易; *taiyi* 太易) transforms itself into the One [; the One transforms itself into the Seven]” [Ch. 1 *tianrui* 天瑞] What is called the One is just all about the beginning of the change of [physical] forms (*xingbian* 形變); it cannot be the One that is not a number.

若直以一為太極, 則不容復言道生一。與列子“易變而為一[; 一變而為七]”之語, 正同。所謂一者, 皆形變之始耳; 不得為非數之一也。²⁰⁶

With the help of the *Liezi*, Zhu Xi asserts that the One should not be understood as *taiji*, the origin of all things. However, when he lectured on the *Zhouyi*, Zhu Xi borrowed the phrase from the *Laozi* Ch. 42, comparing the One to *taiji*; specifically, about the *Diagram of the Precedent Heaven* (*Xiantian tu* 先天圖) by Fuxi 伏羲, Zhu held that people instantly got to know, “the One produces the Two” when they saw the *yin* and *yang* below *taiji* in the *Xiantian tu*. (ZY 66:9) In fact, Yulgok took Zhu's comparison between the One and *taiji* (ZY 66:9), appropriating it for his explanation on the *Xici zhuan* A:11 in the *Seonghak jipyo* (*Gist of Sagely Learning*):

²⁰⁵ Moreover, for Yulgok the two forces are *yin* and *yang* as he defines them in the *Senghak jipyo*: “The two forces are *yin* and *yang*” (“二氣則陰陽,” *SHJY* 2:4; *CWYG*, *kwon* 20:44b; *KTYJ* (V), p. 70.) This understanding of the Two can bolster the identification between the One and *Dao* (*taiji*).

²⁰⁶ *Jijie* Ch.42; *ZD* 12:844a-b. Also seen in Peng Si 彭耜 (flor.1229), *Daode zhenjing jizhu* 道德真經集注 Ch.42; *ZD* 13:190a. This is originally from “*Da Cheng Taizhi*” 答程泰之 (Reply to Cheng Taiji), *Zhuxi wenji*, *juan* 37; *Zhuxi ji*, volume 3, p. 1666. Also, refer to “*Da Cheng Kejiu*” 答程可久 (The first reply to Cheng Kejiu), *ibid.*; *Zhuxi ji*, volume. 3, p. 1660. And in the *Zhuzi yulei*, comments about the *Laozi* Ch.42 are seen three times; *ZY* 100:14, 125:42, and 125:43, which are all negative comments.

Zhuzi said, “It is the natural principle that the One always produces the Two. The Changes are [i.e., consist of] the transformation of *yin* and *yang*; *taiji* is the principle. The two modes are one in the beginning and divided into two...”

朱子曰，一每生二自然之理也。易者陰陽之變；太極者其理也。兩儀者始為一畫以分陰陽...²⁰⁷

As discussed earlier, Yulgok consistently applies the above idea to his interpretation of the *Laozi*. However, I do not mean to suggest that Yulgok deliberately distort Zhu Xi’s understanding of the One in the *Laozi*, which distinguishes the One from *Dao* and *taiji*. What I am arguing is that Yulgok presented what he took to be the key to Zhu Xi’s philosophy, which despite sayings to the contrary, really regards the One as *taiji*, *li*, and *Dao*.

1-[2] and [3] of the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 1 also touch on the fundamental issue in the Neo-Confucian *li-qi* philosophy – cosmic generation (*liuxing* 流行). Undoubtedly, Yulgok was thinking on the *Xici zhuan* A:5 and B:1: “The incessant process of production is called the Changes” (生生之謂易) and “The great virtue of Heaven and Earth is production” (天地之大德曰生). The concluding remark of the chapter reads, “Chapter 1 [of the *Sun-Eon*] tells the meaning of the **transformation** of the Heavenly *Dao* and the **generation** of human and other things thereof.” (第一章，言天道造化發生人物之義). This should align the *Sun-Eon* with the *Xici zhuan* and remind us of Yulgok’s received text of the *Laozi* – Heshang gong’s *Zhangju*, in which the *Laozi* Ch. 42 is titled the “**Transformation** of *Dao*” (*Daohua* 道化). Although the title might have been added by a later editor, the title well captures the contents of the commentary:

That which *Dao* lets take place in the beginning is the One; the One begets *yin* and *yang*; *yin* and *yang* begets the harmonious, the clear, and the turbid *qi* (breaths). These three *qi* are differentiated and became heaven, earth, and man; heaven, earth, and man

²⁰⁷ *SHJY* 2:4; *CWYG*, *kwon* 20:36b-37a; *KTYJ* (V), p. 61. Originally from Zhu Xi, *Zhouyi benyi* 周易本義, Comment on *Xici zhuan* A:11. For the relationship between Zhu Xi’s *Xiantian tu* and Daoism, refer to Zhan Shichuang 詹石窗, *Lun Zhu Xi yixue yu Daojia zhi guanxi* 論朱熹易學與道家之關係, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 11:239-57., Esp. pp. 248-249.

together beget the ten thousand things. [That is,] Heaven gives, Earth transforms, and man grows and nurtures them.²⁰⁸

道使所生者一也; 一生陰與陽也; 陰陽生和、清、濁三氣, 分爲天地人也; 天地[人]共生萬物也, 天施地化, 人長養之. (**LZZJ** Ch. 42)

Heshang gong's *Zhangju* is comparable to Yulgok's viewpoint as well as the *Xici zhuan* in light of the emphasis on "production" (generation, *sheng* 生). However, the One and *Dao* in Heshang gong cannot be divorced from the concept of *qi*. The *Zhangju* Ch. 10 defines the One as "That which *Dao* produces in the beginning" (*Dao shi suosheng* 道始所生) and "The essential *qi* of the Great Harmony" (*taihezhi jingqi* 太和之精氣), which reflects an understanding of cosmogony through "*qi*-transformation" (*qihua* 氣化).²⁰⁹

However, *Dao* and the One in the *Sun-Eon* cannot be identified with *qi*. Rather, the "Two" (*yin* and *yang*) is *qi*, and the One is ascribed to *li* as the equivalent of *Dao* and *taiji* – the fundamental reason for all phenomena and entities ("suoyi 所以": *that by which*, **SE** Ch. 2). Neo-Confucianism holds, "*Yin-yang* movement is the successive movement of *qi*, and its principle (*li*) is called *Dao*; *yin* and *yang* are not *Dao* but *qi*, and that by which *yin* and *yang* are *yin* and *yang* is *Dao*."²¹⁰ Hence, although the *Sun-Eon* uses the *Zhangju* as the received text, Yulgok's interpretation of the *Laozi* is not totally under Heshang gong's influence.

In defining *Dao* and the One as the Neo-Confucian *li* and *taiji* as "that by which," Yulgok shows his understanding of *Dao* as the ontological source of all beings, i.e., "*benti* 本

²⁰⁸ The translation is adapted from Alan K.L. Chan, *Two vision of the Way*, p. 125. The English translation of Heshang gong's commentaries will continue to be adapted from Alan Chan's book, on the basis of my own reading.

²⁰⁹ It is interesting that Dunhuang P2639 edition **LZZJ** Ch.39 defines the One as the "original *qi*" (*yuanqi* 元氣) and the "son of *Dao*" (*Daozhizi* 道之子). Wang Ka, *ibid.*, p. 156. And, for a detailed explanation on the relationship among *Dao*, the One, and *qi*, see Alan Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 122-133.

²¹⁰ "朱子曰, 陰陽迭運氣也. 其理則所謂道. 陰陽是氣不是道; 所以陰陽者乃道也." **SHJY** 2:4; **CWYG**, *kwon* 20:37a; **KTYJ** (V), p. 61. Originally from the *Zhouyi benyi*, Comment on the *Xici zhuan* A:5 Also, see **ZY** 74:109-11, 94:122, 95:83, etc.; *Henan chengshi yishu*, *juan* 15; *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 160.

體 or *benyuan* 本源.” This can be traced back to Wang Bi’s interpretation of *Dao* and the One as the master and the ultimate:

[In the universe, there are] ten thousand things and forms; however, they return to the One. How can they reach the One? Owing to non-being (*wu* 無). Owing to *wu* is the One. The One can be called *wu*... Therefore, I know the master in the generation of ten thousand things; although there are ten thousand [different] forms, all their *qi*-s of vacancy [for the harmonious balance] are the same (one). Although all the families have [something for their own good in] their minds and different countries have different customs, those kings and their peers, who attained the One, master them. [All beings eventually] take the One to be the master, [and so] how can we abandon the One? The more, the further [from the One], [and so] if we [continue to] reduce [high numbers to low numbers in our thought], then we would get closer [to the One]. When the reduction gets to the exhaustiveness, the *ultimate* (*ji* 極; the One) can be attained. (on Ch. 42)

萬物萬形，其歸一也。何由致一。由於無也。由無乃一，一可謂無... 故萬物之生，吾知其主，雖有萬形，沖氣一焉。百姓有心，異國殊風，而(得一者)王侯[得一者]主焉。以一爲主，一何可舍。愈多愈遠，損則近之。損之至盡，乃得其極。(WBJJ, p.116)

Every event has the origin; everything has the master. Although paths are different, all the paths return to the same point; although thought is a hundred in kind, all the conclusions attain to the one (the same). *Dao* has the great constancy; *li* has the great reach. (on Ch. 47)

事有宗而物有主，途雖殊而(歸)[其]歸[同]也，慮雖百而其致一也。道有大常，理有大致。(WBJJ, p.126)

Wang Bi tells us that in the first place, the One means every overarching essence in each thing and affair, namely, “the master” (*zhu*) and “the ultimate” (*ji*). It is not a proper noun referring to a specific, concrete entity but a general term for the function of control over each and every thing and affair. Thus, the One is *Dao*, the ultimate ground of everything as the “That-by-Which”;²¹¹ however, it does not have a physical form, and therefore can be called “non-being” (*wu*). The above passages from Wang Bi suggest that the One is the origin and master of everything and associated with the ultimate (*ji*), *li*, *Dao*, and non-being.²¹² This is

²¹¹ For the importance of the “That-by-Which” in Wang Bi’s commentary, refer to Rudolf G. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China – Wang Bi’s Scholarly Exploration of the Dark (Xuanxue)* (New York: SUNY, 2003). Besides, his translation, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing* reflects his attention to the “That-by-Which.”

²¹² Lou also tells that the origin and the master refer to *Dao*, the One, and *wu*. See WBJJ, p. 126.

comparable to Yulgok's understanding of *Dao* and the One, which are *taiji* and *li* as the "that by which."²¹³

Accordingly, the *Sun-Eon* may be regarded as complex in its constitution, for it takes into consideration both cosmic generation (*liuxing*) and its ontological source (*benti*). A pertinent question to ask at this point is how *Dao* (*li*) as the ontological source functions in the realm of cosmic generation. In other words, the realm of cosmic generation is nothing but *qi*

²¹³ My attention to the similarity between Neo-Confucian *li* as "that by which" and Wang Bi's is partly indebted to Wagner's study on Wang Bi. However, as far as the concept *li* in Wang Bi is discussed in conjunction with Neo-Confucianism, we need to think about Alan Chan's question:

"...At this point, suffice it to say that the concept of *li* (in Wang Bi) serves to describe the ordered and ordering manifestation of *Tao* (*Dao*) in the world. In this sense, it seems to me that Wang Pi (Wang Bi)'s understanding of *li* cannot be equated with that of the Neo-Confucians. The idea of principle in Wang Pi's commentary on the *Lao-tze* (*Laozi*), like the notion of *wu*, lacks the sense of ontological independence that is apparent in the later development of the concept. It is not my intention, however, to reduce the richness of Neo-Confucian philosophy into a single formulation. My point is simply that in the Wang Pi's commentary, *li* is understood primarily as a **heuristic concept**, which seeks to articulate the way in which *Tao* is related to the world, and its implications for the task of self-cultivation." (Alan Chan, *ibid.*, p. 54)

I also do not mean to assert that Wang Bi's *li* is exactly the same as Neo-Confucian, particularly, Yulgok's *li*; for Wang Bi, *li* is not the central concept for understanding the *Laozi* as well as his philosophy in general, whereas for Yulgok, *li* is no doubt the most important concept for understanding the *Laozi*, not to mention his philosophy in general. The similarity between Yulgok and Wang Bi that I try to highlight here is that Yulgok's association of such concepts as *Dao*, the One, *li*, *taiji*, and *wu* is comparable to Wang Bi's grouping of the same concepts. It is not my intention to compare only the *li* concept in both of them. In order to ensure a fair comparison, rather than Wang Bi's *li*, his *Dao* and *wu* should be compared with Neo-Confucian and Yulgok's *Dao* and *li*, although Wang Bi's *li* cannot but be dealt with as a sub-mode of his *Dao*. However, as far as their *Laozi* reading is concerned, the difficulty can be dissolved by the concept, *Dao* because the issue is how they after all overall understand the concept of *Dao*, not *li* concept only. And in relation to Alan Chan's mention of Neo-Confucian *li*'s "ontological independence," I would like to point out that despite the undeniable theoretical priority of *li* in Neo-Confucianism, Yulgok clearly emphasizes that although *li* does not have a form and action, it is not separable from *qi* and concrete and actual beings that have forms and actions. (Refer to II-3. *Yulgok's metaphysics of Li and Qi*) In fact, we may claim that for Yulgok, *li* does not have "ontological independence" but 'theoretical and axiological priority.' Insofar as the "ontological independence" calls for 'li-qi dualism,' I would not apply this term to Yulgok because his position is closer to 'li-qi monism.' This position of Yulgok as reflected on his reading of the *Laozi*, will be discussed.

process, which is always moving, irregular, and both moral and immoral, whereas the ontological source should be the “that by which” the realm of cosmic generation becomes as such and the overarching principle (*Dao*, *li*, and the One) that brings the perfect harmony and balance and regularity to everything. Do not these two contradict each other? How are they combined with each other? Wang Bi seems to try to resolve this contradiction by introducing the concept of “non-being” (*wu* 無) to *Dao* and the One, as seen in the above. Although Yulgok’s definition of *Dao* and the One ostensibly lacks the quality of “non-being,” the concept of non-being underlies the *Sun-Eon* 1-[2], [3], and elsewhere, thereby trying to resolve the contradiction between cosmic generation and its ontological source. This will be discussed in the next section.

1-2) *Wu / You, Li / Qi, and Xin*

The relationship between “being” (*you* 有) and “non-being” (*wu* 無)²¹⁴ is critical to *Laozi* learning because it is central to understanding the doctrine of creation in the philosophy of *Laozi*.²¹⁵ And the discussion about being and non-being cannot but relate to argument about *Dao*, the One. As will be discussed, Yulgok’s discussion on being and non-being in the *Laozi*

²¹⁴ For example, the *Laozi* Ch.1, “Through the constant non-being we may desire to observe the subtlety; through the constant being we may desire to observe the borders [between things]. *The two are the same, but after they are produced, they have different names.*” (故常無欲以觀其妙，常有欲以觀其徼。此兩者，同出而異名…) Ch.2, “*Non-being and being give birth to each other.*” (有無相生); Ch.40, “Ten thousand things under the heaven are produced by being. *Being is produced by non-being.*” (天下萬物生於有，有生於無) As to Ch.1, there have been many opinions; it is not clear where it has to be punctuated as “*chang-wu* 常無 *yu* 欲 (; *adj.+noun, verb*) and *chang-you* 常有 *yu* 欲 (; *adj.+noun, verb*)” or “*chang* 常 *wu-yu* 無欲 (; *adv., adj.+noun*) and *chang* 常 *you-yu* 有欲 (; *adv., adj.+noun*).” Wing-tsit Chan prefers the first option, which was originally suggested by Wang Anshi. (Chan, *ibid.*, p. 139) On the other hand, Heshang gong and Wang Bi prefer the second. It is worth noting that whichever is chosen, the subsequent sentence clearly suggests that the two contradictory pairs should be regarded as originating from the same source.

²¹⁵ In other words, depending on interpretation of the *you* and *wu* concepts, one may regard the philosophy of *Laozi* as holding the creation from nihility or the generation from intangible *archē* (the original *qi*) or an ontological speculation, etc.

is closely related with such concepts as *li* and *qi*, the heart-mind, and the *ti-yong* concept in Neo-Confucianism.

A. *Non-being, li/qi, and spontaneity*

The first chapter of the *Sun-Eon*, particularly 1-[2] and [3], concerns the issue of non-being and being in conjunction with *li* and *qi*. I repeat them here for easy reference:

1-[2] *The space between Heaven and Earth is like a bellows and pipe.*

Mr. Dong said, “1-[2-1] *Tak/tuo* 橐 means a pair of bellows; *yak/yue* 籥 means a pipe; both are things that can receive breath (*ki/qi* 氣; material force) and blow out wind (*pung/feng* 風). 1-[2-2] [The truth] that ***in the in-between space of Heaven and Earth*** (*cheonji ji kan/tiandi zhi jian* 天地之間), the two forces come and go, contract and expand is likened to [the fact] that these things [i.e., bellows and pipe] have ***no core*** (*mushim/wuxin* 無心) and are ***vacuous*** (*heo/xu* 虛), and thereby able to ***receive*** (*su/shou* 受) and ***respond*** (*yeung/ying* 應) to [things coming in] but do not keep them in store.”

董氏曰, 橐, 鞴也。籥, 管也。能受氣、鼓風之物。天地之間, 二氣往來、屈伸, 猶此物之無心、虛而能受, 應而不藏也。

1-[3] *Vacuous but inexhaustible [is it] and [the more] it moves, the more it produces.*

1-[3-1] We see ***no shape*** (*muhyeong/wuxing* 無形) [***in the in-between space of Heaven and Earth***], but no thing does not ***receive*** the shape [from it]. [It] moves and produces and produces (*shengsheng* 生生), and the more it produces, the more inexhaustible it becomes. 1-[3-2] Zhuzi said, “[If it] were not to ***receive*** anything [coming in], [it] would be exhaustible, albeit, vacuous; [if it] were not to ***respond*** to anything [coming in], [it] would not be able to produce, even though it moves.”

無形可見, 而無一物不受形焉。動而生生。愈生而愈無窮焉。朱子曰, 有一物之不受, 則虛而屈矣; 有一物之不應, 是動而不出矣。

The “in-between space” (*kan/jian* 間), “no core” (*mushim/wuxin*), “vacuity” (*heo/xu*) (1-[2]), and “no shape” (*muhyeong/wuxing*) (1-[3]) are all intangibles associated with the concept of non-being (*wu*), and *qi* and all things as beings (*you*) are understood to be generated by such intangibles. But this vacuous space (for example, non-being of the hub of a wheel, container, and room, as the *Laozi* Ch. 11 illustrates) cannot be regarded as the ontological source of cosmic generation; *Dao* or *li* as the metaphysical non-being is regarded as the ontological source. Nevertheless, in 1-[3-1] and 1-[3-2], the “in-between space of Heaven and

Earth” is metaphorically used to introduce the concept of *Dao* as non-being as the ultimate source because first of all, the in-between space and *Dao* share the quality of intangibility (*wuxing*); second of all, the in-between space of Heaven and Earth ceaselessly generates all things just as *Dao* does.²¹⁶ The virtue of Heaven and Earth, “ceaseless production”

²¹⁶ One might want to ask whether or not Yulgok was clearly aware of the difference between empty space and the metaphysical non-being and the interwoven-ness of them. As a matter of fact, Yulgok clearly aware that non-being has two modes – physical and metaphysical, which are all regarded as important:

Non-being (*mu/wu*) contains the marvelous being (*myo/miao* 妙有); beings (*you*) reveal the true non-being (*jinmu/zhenwu* 真無). *Dao* does not exist outside concrete things (*ki/qi* 器). *Li* is together with things, too. The abundant transformation is endless; the flow of stream is ceaseless. Who is in charge of the mechanism? Alas, the Great Ultimate (*taiji*) is it!

無涵妙有, 有著真無. 道非器外, 理與物俱. 敦化無窮; 川流不息. 孰尸其機. 嗚呼太極!
 (“Liyilbunsu bu” 理一分殊賦, Bu/fu 賦 (prosaic poem), *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (I) p. 48.)

The pairs of concepts, “non-being – the marvelous being” and “being – the true non-being” can be categorized as the significant group consisting of the “true non-being” and the “marvelous being” and the derivative group consisting of “non-being” and “being.” (Zhu Xi says, “The principle (*li*) of the world is that in the ultimate vacuity, there exists the ultimate fullness; in the ultimate non-being, there exists the ultimate being.” (天下之理, 至虛之中, 有至實者存; 至無之中, 有至有者存, *ZY* 13:65.)) Notable is that “non-being” in the above is not the metaphysical non-being but physical non-being, i.e., vacuous space and thus is the same as being, by its nature, and that the “true non-being” should be the metaphysical non-being, i.e., the Great Ultimate (*taiji*) – *li* (*Dao*), and thus is the same as the marvelous being. However, as Yulgok says, non-being should be regarded as containing *li* as the marvelous being, although it looks like nothing is involved; being (thingness) should be considered to be based on *li* (*Dao*) as the true non-being, although it looks full of something that does not need something else as *raison d’être*. In other words, non-being is full of the marvelous being as well as physical entities; being is rooted in the true non-being and yet filling non-being. This interwoven-ness is also the main issue of the next quotation:

Where does the original *qi* (*wonki/yuanqi*) sprout up? Formlessness resides in form (*yuhyeong/youxing* 有形). When we exhaust the origin we get to know that they are originally united (*bonhap/benhe* 本合), and when we think according to the flow [of change] we see that they turn into the five phases (*ohaeng/wuxing* 五行). The form of water is in accordance with the squareness or roundness of containers; that of space with the sizes of bottles. You should, [however], not be confused about the divergence of the two (formlessness/form). You try to silently meditate on the truth that nature (*seong/xing* 性) becomes feelings (*jeong/qing* 情).

元氣何端始, 無形在有形, 窮源知本合, 沿派見羣精, 水逐方圓器, 空隨小大瓶, 二岐君莫惑, 默驗性爲情.

(*shengsheng*) undoubtedly refers to the function of *Dao* just as the philosophy of the *Zhouyi* does. Hence, 1-[3-1] can be understood to be appropriated from Zhu Xi's words: "*Dao* has no shaped body for us to be able to see" (*Dao wu xingti kejian* 道無形體可見, **ZY** 38:120). This becomes clear through a close investigation of Zhu Xi's comments on the *Laozi* Chs. 5 and 6, on which 1-[3-2] is based:

Someone asks about "the numinous of the valley" (*gushen* 谷神) [*Laozi* Ch. 6]. Zhu Xi says, "The valley just means the emptiness (*xu*), which can receive (*shou*) [incoming things]; the numinous means that there is no occasion when it does not respond (*ying*)." [The *Laozi* Ch. 5] also says "Vacuous but inexhaustible, the more it moves; the more it produces." This means that [if it] were not to receive anything [coming in], [it] would be exhaustible, albeit, vacuous; [if it] were not to respond to anything [coming in], [it] would not be able to produce, even though it moves.

問“谷神。”曰，“谷只是虛而能受，神謂無所不應。它又云，‘虛而不屈，動而愈出，’有一物之不受，則虛而屈矣；有一物之不應，是動而不能出矣。

(**ZY** 125:30; the *Jijie* Ch. 5; **ZD** 12:825c)

Zhu Xi seamlessly connects the *Laozi* Ch. 5 with Ch. 6. The "vacuous space of the valley" (*Laozi* Ch. 6) is compared to the "space between Heaven and Earth" (*Laozi* Ch. 5). Of particular interest is that Zhu Xi explicates the numinous of the valley (*gushen* 谷神) as consisting of two parts, so to speak, the valley (*gu* 谷) and the numinous (*shen* 神). The valley

("Likieong jeong wukye dohyeong" 理氣詠呈牛溪道兄 (Reciting *li* and *qi*, dedicated to brother Wukye), 3rd Dap Seong Ho-Won, Seo (letter) 2, **CWYG**, *kwon* 10; **PTYJ** (III), p. 77)

Empty space is always full of ten thousand things that have various forms; all the things are generated by the movement of *yin* and *yang qi*-s; however, *yin* and *yang* are the two correlative modes in constantly moving material force rather than individual substances. At the center of *yin-yang* alternation, there is the formless being (*muhyeong/wuxing*; formlessness; above form; *xingershang*; metaphysical), that enables *yin* and *yang* to continue to maintain the totality or correlativity of themselves and yet generate various things (*ohaeng/wuxing*; the five phases). In other words, this *a priori* state, the totality of *yin* and *yang* is none other than the original *qi*; the original *qi* is the state in which *qi* stays unified, ideally representing *li*. *Li* is amalgamated (*bonhap/benhe*) with *qi* movement all the way through; *li* embraces cleavage as well as integration, which means both generative transformation and metaphysical totality. This is clear when Yulgok says, "The original *qi* produces and produces without a stop, and the foregone *qi* is already gone away; the coming *qi* succeeds the foregone. There is already not the foregone *qi* [now and here]." (元氣生生不息，往者過；來者續，而已往之氣，已無所在。)(**CWYG**, *kwon* 10, p. 38a; **PTYJ** (III), p. 95) The original *qi* seems to be a purely conceptual being, i.e. *a priori* being by nature.

refers to the vacuous space (*xu*) that enables the unconditional reception (*shou*) of external beings, while the numinous refers to the valley's unconditional response (*ying*) to external beings. The reason why Zhu Xi separates “*gushen*” into “*gu*” and “*shen*” becomes clear in his other comments on the term, “*shen*” and the *Laozi* Ch. 6:

N1 Someone asked, “Is the so-called the numinous (*shen*) the generation and transformation (*zaohua* 造化) of Heaven and Earth?” Zhu Xi replied, “The numinous refers just to this *li* (principle).”

曰, “所謂神者, 是天地之造化否?” 曰, “神, 卽此理也。” (ZY 94:185)

N2 Someone asked about “It moves and yet does not move; it is still and yet not still.” Zhu Xi said, “This indicates that it moves, producing *yang* and it becomes still when the movement reaches the ultimate, and that it is still, producing *yin* and it begins to move again when the stillness reaches the ultimate. This teaching implicates that there is the numinous within the process (*zaiqijian* 在其間; in the in-between space or moment), which belongs to neither *yin* nor *yang*. Hence, it is said, “[We are] unable to fathom whether it is *yin* or *yang*, and therefore it is called the numinous.”

問, “動而無動, 靜而無靜。” 曰, “此說‘動而生陽, 動極而靜, 靜而生陰, 靜極復動.’ 此自有箇神在其間, 不屬陰, 不屬陽, 故曰, ‘陰陽不測之謂神.’” (ZY 94:182)

LZ6 Someone asks about “The numinous of the valley never dies.” Zhu Xi replies, “The vacuity of the valley echoes and responds when sounds come in, which is the spontaneity (*ziran* 自然; self-so-ness) of the numinous (*shen*) and the transformation (*hua* 化). In “It is called the dark female,” “dark” (*xuan* 玄: dark; profound; subtle) means “wondrous” (*miao* 妙); “female” (*pin* 牝) means that it produces things when it receives things. [This chapter discusses] the most wondrous *li*, in which there is the meaning of the ceaseless production [of heaven and earth] [*Xici zhuan* A:5 and B:1], which is the saying that Master Cheng took from Laozi.

問, “谷神不死。” 曰, “谷之虛也, 聲達焉, 則響應之, 乃神化之自然也。‘是謂玄牝.’ 玄, 妙也; 牝, 是有所受而能生物者也。至妙之理, 有生生之意焉, 程子所取老氏之說也。

(ZY 125:3; the *Jijie* Ch. 6; ZD 12:826b)

Passage **N1** clearly shows that Zhu Xi understands the numinous as *li*, e.g., *Dao*.

Hence, it is not *qi*; rather, it is “that by which” the *yin-yang* alternation process is enabled. As seen in **N2**, the numinous as *li* resides in the conceptual “in-between” space or moment for *yin-yang* alternation, and thus can be thought to penetrate the *qi* process, or the generation and transformation of all things (*zaohua*). Accordingly, the reason why Zhu Xi separates *gushen* into *gu* and *shen* is that he classifies *gu* and *shen* into non-being in a physical form and the metaphysical non-being respectively. However, the vacuous space of the valley and that of Heaven and Earth can be a metaphor for *Dao*, for it is vacuous space that provides the field for

every movement, interaction, and production of every sentient and non-sentient being, just as *li* provides the ground for everything. In other words, through the example of the vacuous space, where all beings (thingness) including *qi* occur – ironically busy and crowded space, one can ponder on metaphysical *li* as the underlying being. Indeed, for Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucians the *Laozi* Ch. 6 was considered to be inspirational to their thought on *li* in conjunction with *qi*.²¹⁷ Zhu Xi's words, "This is the self-so-ness (*ziran*) of the numinous (*shen*) and the transformation (*hua*)" should be interpreted as reflecting on both *li* and *qi*; the phenomena in the valley are *qi* transformation (*hua*), and yet the transformation and generation are what are caused and driven by the numinous (*shen*), i.e., *li*.

Consequently, we can affirm that Yulgok's use of Zhu Xi's comments on the *Laozi* Ch. 5 is made against the backdrop of Zhu Xi's larger understanding of the *Laozi* Chs.5 and 6, which highlights the metaphysics of *Dao*. Yulgok too implicitly introduces the concept of *Dao* and *li* as the metaphysical non-being into his understanding of the non-being in physical forms (vacuous space) in which *yin* and *yang qi* interact and all myriad things are ceaselessly brought into being.

For both Zhu Xi and Yulgok, the generation and transformation of all things are made in the flux and reflux of *qi* in the in-between space of Heaven and Earth, which constitutes the realm of being (*you*); *Dao* or *li* is the ultimate ground for the generation and transformation, and thereby indicates the realm of non-being (*wu*). For Zhu Xi the only explanation about this relationship between *li* (*wu*) and *qi* (*you*) is "This is the spontaneity (*ziran*; self-so-ness) of the

²¹⁷ "Er xiansheng yu san" 二先生語 三, *Henan chengshi yishu*, juan 3: *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 64, "There is a barely good point in Zhuangzi's description of the substance of *Dao* (*Daoti* 道體). The chapter of "the spirit of the valley (*gushen*) never dies" is most excellent." (莊生形容道體之語, 儘有好處. 老氏谷神不死一章最佳.) Indeed, this chapter could be appreciated as a lively description of philosophy of the *Zhouyi* including the *Xici zhuan*; it is not difficult to find the traces of Laozi's philosophy in the two Cheng brothers' work on the *Zhouyi*. Particularly "Yixu" 易序 (Preface of the *Zhouyi*), *yiwen* 遺文, *Henan chengshi wenji* 河南程氏文集; *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 667 and volume 2, p. 690.

numinous (*shen*; *li*) and the transformation (*hua*; *qi*).” (LZ6) In other words, *li* (*Dao*) is spontaneous and, as a result, the *qi* process is spontaneous, too. In the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 1, Yulgok mentions “no core” (*mushim/wuxin* 無心) of the space between Heaven and Earth. The literal meaning of “no core” is “no heart-mind.” Accordingly, it can be taken to mean the “emptied mind,” or no deliberation or spontaneity. Thus, the vacuous space between Heaven and Earth is characterized by “no deliberate action” (*wuwei*) and “spontaneity” (*ziran*). The *wuwei* and *ziran* of the space of Heaven and Earth are nothing but the characteristics of *Dao*.²¹⁸ Being associated with *wuwei* and *ziran*, the concept of non-being reveals its tight relationship with *Dao* (*li*).²¹⁹

B. Non-being and the Heart-mind

²¹⁸ The *Laozi* Ch.25 reads, “Human emulates Earth; Earth emulates Heaven; Heaven emulates *Dao*; *Dao* emulates spontaneity.” (人法地, 地法天, 天法道, 道法自然)

²¹⁹ In fact, Zhu Xi’s and Yulgok’s insight into the relationship between non-being and *ziran* in the *Laozi* Chs. 5 and 6 and the *Sun-Eon* Chs. 1 and 2 can be traced back to Wang Bi:

The centers of bellows and pipe are empty and hollow, and they do not have emotion and action. Hence, they are vacuous but cannot be dwindled away into nothing; they move but cannot be exhausted. The space between Heaven and Earth is compliant to self-so-ness (*ziran*; spontaneity) leisurely. Accordingly, it cannot be exhausted just as bellows and pipe are so.

橐籥之中空洞, 無情無爲, 故虛而不得窮屈, 動而不可竭盡也。天地之中, 蕩然任自然, 故不可得而窮, 猶若橐籥也。 (WBJJ p.14)

The *gushen* means nothingness (non-being) of valley, which does not have form, image (shade), contradiction, and contravention. It stays lowly and does not move; secures stillness and does not waste away. Although things are accomplished by it, we cannot see the form. This should be the supreme thing. [It] stays lowly and secures stillness and unable to name; therefore, it is called “dark female” (*xuanpin*).

谷神, 谷中央無(谷)²¹⁹[者]也。無形無影, 無逆無違, 處卑不動, 守靜不衰, (谷)[物]以之成而不見其形, 此至物也。處卑(而)[守靜]不可得[而]名, 故謂[之玄牝]。 (WBJJ p.16)

However, Zhu Xi and, further, Yulgok differ from Wang Bi in that both introduce and spell out the concept of *li* as the meta-physical non-being, and add the concept of *qi* to their understanding of Chs. 5 and 6 of the *Laozi*.

As seen in the above discussion, non-being and being closely relate to *li* and *qi*. As generally noted, the Neo-Confucian metaphysics of *li* and *qi* connect with such concepts as nature, emotions, and the heart-mind (*xin*) in Neo-Confucian moral psychology. Hence, we can expect *wu* and *you* to relate with those psychological concepts. This is also discussed in the *Sun-Eon*, particularly Ch. 4 (*Laozi* Ch. 11):

4-[1] *The thirty spokes [of a wheel] share one hub, whose nothingness (mu/wu, non-being, vacuous space) brings into being the utility (yong 用) of the wheel ...*

三十輻이 共一轂에 當其無하야 有車之用하고

4-[1-a] Zhuzi said, “Non-being is the empty space of the hub [of a wheel]. Only the empty space of the hub can take in the axle, and so the wheel can roll infinitely.”

朱子曰, 無是轂中空處, 惟其空中, 故能受軸, 而運轉不窮.

4-[1-b] Mr. Dong said, “[This sentence] means that the spokes and the hub work together so that they can make wheels (*cha/che* 車) [work]; therefore, in the vacuous space of the center [of a wheel] resides the utility of wheels.”

董氏曰, 謂輻轂相湊以爲車, 即其中之虛, 有車之用.

4-[4] ...Hence, being can be regarded as [the source of] profit (*li* 利); non-being should be considered [the source of] the utility [of all beings].

故有之以爲利오 無之以爲用이니라.

4-[4-a] [Mr. Dong said,] “The outside (circumscribing) being [of something] makes possible [corporeal] forms; inside non-being (empty space) takes in things [from outside].”

外有而成形, 中無而受物.

4-[4-b] Outside being can be likened to body (*shin/shen* 身); inside non-being to the heart-mind (*shim/xin* 心). The profit [of thingness (being)] becomes containers to use; the utility [of nothingness (non-being)] becomes the make-ups (*ki/ji* 機) of the profit. Without body, the heart-mind could not have a place to abide in. **4-[4-b]^R** [Accordingly,] if the heart-mind is not vacuous, *li* cannot have a place to be received. The heart-mind of a gentleman (*kunja/junzi* 君子) is certainly vacuous and bright [as a mirror] (*heomyeong/xuming* 虛明), containing nothing (*mumul/wuwu* 無物); hence, it can respond (*ying* 應) to [external] things. For example, if the center of the hub is not vacuous, then the wheel cannot roll; if the center of a container is not vacuous, then the container is of no use; if the center of a room is not vacuous, then the room is impossible to live in.

外有譬則身也; 中無譬則心也. 利者, 順適之意. 利, 為用之器; 用, 為利之機也. 非身, 則心無所寓, 而心不虛, 則理無所容. 君子之心, 必虛明、無物然後, 可以應物, 如轂中不虛, 則為不運之車; 器中不虛, 則為無用之器; 室中不虛, 則為不居之室矣.²²⁰

²²⁰ The comment is interspersed with quotation from Dong's *jijue* and Yulgok's idea. The first sentence is from the *Jijue* Ch.11 (**ZD** 12:829b), but the rest cannot be regarded as a quotation.

In this passage, first of all, Yulgok pays attention to the physical non-being (vacuous space) by appropriating Zhu Xi and Dong's words (4-[1-a] and [4-1-b]). 4-[4-a] tells us that physical being and non-being are interwoven and enable things to have forms and utility.²²¹ It is in 4-[4-b] and 4-[4-b]^R that Yulgok tries to incorporate the meaning of the metaphysical non-being into the discourse. The heart-mind does not refer to a specific physical organ (cerebrum (*nao* 腦) or cardiac viscera (*xinzang* 心臟)) but the capability of awareness, comprehension, and response (*zhi* 知, *jue* 覺, and *ying* 應) and its contents. Before it has any contents, the original state of the heart-mind is vacuous and bright like a mirror (*heomyeong/xuming* and *mumul/wuwu*).²²² However, the heart-mind itself needs to be regarded not as meta-physicality but as a mode of mobile physicality, according to Yulgok and Zhu Xi.²²³ It is the place where the metaphysical non-being ("True non-being" or "Marvelous

²²¹ "[The empty space of the hub is] like the bamboo ring on the handle of an umbrella, in which all the ribs of an umbrella gather. The emptiness in the center of the ring takes in the handle and enables us to spread up and fold down the umbrella. The hub of the wheel is also the same as this. The words in the *Zhaungzi*, "[It is called the pivot of *Dao* (*Daoshu* 道樞)] The pivot of a hinge can fit in the centre of the pan of a hinge, and so a hinge can respond [to external forces] inexhaustibly" [*Zhuangzi* 2:3] have the same meaning, too." (猶傘柄上木管子, 衆骨所會者. 緣管子中空, 又可受傘柄, 而闢闔下上. 車之轂亦猶是也. 莊子所謂'樞始得其環中, 以應無窮,' 亦此意.") (*ZY* 125:28)

²²² Yulgok says:

The original state (*bonche/benti* 本體) of the heart-mind is as limpid (*damyeon/zhanran* 湛然) and vacuous-bright (*heomyeong/xuming* 虛明) as a mirror is empty and a balance is equilibrated. On the other hand, when it senses [external] things and moves, the seven feelings (*chiljeong/qiqing* 七情) come out and respond to things. This is the function of the heart-mind.
心之本體, 湛然虛明, 如鑒之空, 如衡之平, 而感物而動七情應焉者. 此是心之用也. (*SHJY* 2:8; *CWYG*, *kwon* 21, p. 36a; *KTYJ* (V), pp. 138-39)

This explanation by Yulgok originates mainly from the *Great Learning* (*mingde* 明德: bright virtue) and Zhu Xi's comments on it. For example, *ZY* 16:147, 16:148, 16:152, etc.

²²³ Yulgok says, "The heart-mind is *qi*." (心是氣)(*CWYG*, *kwon* 10, p. 28b; *KTYJ* (III), p. 85) And Zhu Xi says, "The heart-mind is the essential core of *qi*." (心者, 氣之精爽)(*ZY* 5:28) However, it seems unreasonable to think that Yulgok and Zhu Xi define the heart-mind as the sheer *qi* independent of *li*; for them, this definition does not mean a sort of identification between the heart-mind and *qi*; rather, it is considered that the heart-mind cannot but be

being”²²⁴), i.e., *li* (*Dao*) resides as the numinous (*shen*) and brightness (*ming*).²²⁵ And so, the heart-mind can respond to external stimulation as a mirror reflects things. Further, the heart-mind functions as the software of the whole self (*yishen zhi zhuzai* 一身之主宰)²²⁶ rather than the hardware – body itself. The heart-mind is, to this effect, an ambiguous place where *li* and *qi* are intermingled and amalgamated. This amalgamation is expressed as the heart-mind’s inexhaustible sensation/response (*ying*) to external stimulation. It is this concept, *ying* where Yulgok has vacuous space encounter with the heart-mind; the vacuous space of bellows, pipe, Heaven and Earth, and valley inhale/exhale and take in/put out *qi* and beings, which is none

based on mobile physicality as well as *li*, and *li*, in the form of nature (*xing*) already exists in the heart-mind as *qi*. This seems to be supported by the following sentences of Yulgok (*ibid.*) and the mentions of the heart-mind in the *Zhuzi yulei* (ZY 5:20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, etc.) As to the definition of the heart-mind, Chen Lai holds that Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 and Qian Mu 錢穆 make a mistake of seeing heart-mind as *qi* or a concrete thing. (Chen, *ibid.*, p. 219) However, as seen in the next comment as well as the above, Zhu Xi regards the heart-mind as a thing (*wu* 物; *qi* 器; *qi* 氣), even when Zhu does not refer to cardiac viscera as the meaning of heart. This may suggest that the heart-mind can be understood as more concrete or material than *xing* (*li*) but numinous like *li*. For reader’s convenience, I have translated one example from Zhu Xi:

Zhidao says that the heart-mind is the Great Ultimate (*taiji*; *li*), but Lin Zhengqing says that the heart-mind contains the Great Ultimate. [About this problem] Zhu Xi says, “This matter is too subtle to discuss. The heart-mind seems to have move and stop; the body (*ti*) is called change (*yi*); the principle (*li*) is called *Dao*; the function is called the numinous...the body is not the *ti* (the metaphysical body; substance) of *ti/yong* concept, but it is just like the *ti* (physical body) of *ti-zhi* (somatic constitution). Accordingly, it is the same as saying ‘the physical make-up is called change.’ The principle is like nature (*xing*) [in us]. Like this, according to circumstances (contexts), we have to read the sentences flexibly.”

致道謂心爲太極，林正卿謂心具太極。致道舉以爲問。先生曰，“這般處極細，難說。看來心有動靜；其體，則謂之易；其理，則謂之道；其用，則謂之神。”...曰，“體不是<體用>之體，恰似說<體質>之‘體’，猶云‘其質則謂之易。’理即是性，這般所在，當活看。(ZY 5:20)

²²⁴ Refer to footnote 216.

²²⁵ “Although the heart-mind is a thing, it is vacuous, thereby being able to contain all the *li*-s.” (心雖是一物，卻虛，故能包含萬理。)(ZY 5:45); “The heart-mind is the numinous and brightness of human, which is equipped with various principles (*li*) and responds to myriad affairs.” (心者，人之神明，所以具衆理而應萬事者也, *Menzijizhu* 13:1) and *SHJY* 2:4, *CWYG*, *kwon* 20, p. 53b; *KTYJ*, p. 79.

²²⁶ *ZY* 5:88 and 98:43.

other than the process of *ying*. The function of the heart-mind is nothing but *ying*, for it senses and responds to external beings, and it has data and reasoning gained out of such a process. Vacuous space is physicality, and yet it contains the metaphysical non-being; likewise, the heart-mind is basically physical flow, and yet it is not reduced to physicality only, but draw mainly on *li*.

However, *li* (*Dao*) should be regarded as the principle of body (being) as well as that of the heart-mind. In fact, this aspect of *li* is not ignored by Yulgok; the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 14 (*Laozi* Ch. 76) discusses it:

If there is the *qi* of emptiness (*chungki/chongqi*) in us, our bodies would not fall sick with stiffness and hardness; if [we can] control *qi* by *li*, our affairs (*shi* 事) would not get stiff and hard [to deal with.]

沖氣在身, 則體無堅強之病; 以理勝氣, 則事堅強之失矣.

In addition, in dealing with practical affairs (*shi*), *li* (*Dao*) is considered to be the fundamental principle to get things done. As discussed earlier, in Ch. 4, Yulgok focuses on the heart-mind as the vacuous space where the metaphysical non-being's function is well presented in terms of both metaphysics and ethics; *li* (*Dao*) should be the “that by which” everything is so (*suoyiran* 所以然) and the “that which” everything ought to be (*suodanran* 所當然). This practical concern or moral import in his understanding of the *Laozi* becomes obvious when he introduces the concept, Confucian gentleman (*kunjialjunzi*) into the comment (4-[4-b]^R). When Yulgok says, “If the heart-mind is not vacuous, *li* cannot have a place to be received” (4-[4-b]^R), he virtually mentions both *suodanran* and *suoyiran*. *Li* is supposed to reside in our heart-mind as the fundamental ground. However, if we do not cultivate ourselves properly, our heart-mind would not function properly nor accord with the ideal of *li*. The concluding remark of the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 4 emphasizes this import – the practice of emptying the heart-mind, and the next Ch. 5 (*Laozi* Ch. 10) explains the meaning of emptying the heart-mind and summarizes our discussion so far:

Can you wipe out the profound mirror so as to have no dust on it?

滌除玄覽하야 能無疵乎아?

Wipe out means cleaning out one's greed for material things. The profound mirror means reflecting and probing into the marvelous *li*. Generally, if we get rid of our desire for sound, color, smell, and taste, then our heart-mind would be emptied, the objects of our perception (*kyeong/jing* 境 = *jin/chen* 塵, *viśaya*) would be clear [to us without distortion], and, [as a result,] our learning and knowledge could make more progress. When we reach the point where both knowledge and conduct are optimum, we would be flawless.

滌除者 淨洗物欲也. 玄覽者 照察妙理也. 蓋既去聲色臭味之慾, 則心虛境清, 而學識益進, 至於知行並至, 則無一點之疵矣. (SE Ch. 5)

Yulgok clearly interprets the “profound mirror” as the heart-mind – the mirror deep inside us, and suggests that the heart-mind contains or reflects *li* descriptively; on the other hand, the heart-mind needs to be emptied or cleaned prescriptively in order to reflect *li* well. In the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 19, Yulgok again reminds us of this moral implication of non-being (*wu*) by the example of the “vacuity of the valley” (*gok ji heo/gu zhi xu* 谷之虛) that is compared to “humble mind” (*jakyeom/ziqian* 自謙). We will discuss cultivating the heart-mind in detail later.

C. Non-being and substance/function

Yulgok understands that the concepts of non-being and being in the *Laozi* are associated with *ti* and *yong* which are usually translated as “substance” and “function”:

Dao is always doing nothing, and yet nothing remains undone.
道常無爲호대 而無不爲니라.

The doings of Heaven above have neither sound nor smell.²²⁷ Nevertheless, the creation of all myriad things is really rooted in this ...²²⁸
上天之載, 無聲無臭, 而萬物之生, 實本於斯...

“Chapter 3 also follows from the previous chapter and states that the original substance (*bonche/benti* 本體) of *Dao* is ‘no action,’ but its marvelous function (*myoyong/miaoyong* 妙用) ‘leaves nothing undone.’ This is the essential point of this chapter.”
右第三章, 亦承上章, 而言道之本體無爲, 而妙用無不爲, 是一篇之大旨. (SE Ch. 3)

²²⁷ *Shijing* 詩經 3:1:1 (Ch.3 daya 大雅, Sec.1 wenwang 文王, the 1st poem “wenwang 文王”; Legge trans. *Shih King*, Part III: Major Odes of the Kingdom, First Decade, Ode 1. The Wăn Wang); *Zhongyong*, Ch.33

²²⁸ Translation is adapted from James Legge's translation.

Great sound is faint, and Great image has no shape. Hence, Dao is concealed and has no name.

大音은 희聲하며 大象은 無形하니 道穩無名이니라.

Dao originally does not have sound or smell, but it becomes the substance [of everything], so that it cannot be abandoned. We forced the name *Dao* on it, but it actually has no name. The substance and its function (*yong*) share the one source, and [therefore] there is no gap between the revealed (*hyeon/xian* = *yong*) and the concealed (*mi/wei*: *minute* = *ti*). How can mediocre or substandard people clearly understand such truth?

道本無聲無臭, 而體物不遺. 強名之曰道. 其實無名也. 體用一源, 顯微無間之妙, 豈中下之士所能聽瑩哉? (*SE* Ch. 19)

The *Sun-Eon* Ch. 3 clearly adopts the meaning, the “original substance” (*bonche/benti*) as the metaphysical non-being, whose characteristics are “no sound,” “no smell,” “no thought,” and “no action.” And this metaphysical meaning of *ti* is enhanced by Yulgok through the adjectives, “original or root” (*bon/ben*). The *Sun-Eon* Ch. 19 also introduces the concept of the metaphysical non-being to the arguments;²²⁹ such metaphysical non-being is explained as what is concealed (*yin* 隱 and *wei* 微), or what is underlain in the phenomena. In this case, *ti* as the metaphysical non-being can be interpreted as corresponding to the western concept, “substance” or “noumenon.”

However, Yulgok’s usage of *ti* and *yong* in the *Sun-Eon* is not fixed but flexible, as the usage of non-being and being is flexible. In the *Sun-Eon* Chs. 1 and 4, Yulgok adopts Sima Guang’s 司馬光 usage of *ti* and *yong*, which suggests a different usage:

Wengong 溫公 [i.e., Sima Guang, 1019-1086] said, “No thing [in the world] does not take *yin* and *yang* forces as the body (*che/ti* 體) and emptiness (non-being) and harmony (*chungghwa/chonghe* 沖和) as the utility (*yong*).”

溫公曰, 莫不以陰陽爲體; 以沖和爲用. (*SE* Ch. 1)

Sima Guang regards being and non-being as physical entities and vacuous space, and deems *ti* and *yong* to be physical body and its utility respectively. And, as shown already, in the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 4, Yulgok understands non-being (emptiness of a hub, container, and room) to

²²⁹ The *Sun-Eon* Ch.19 also uses the *wu*-congenial terms, and introduces “no name” (*wu-ming*; the ineffability of *Dao*). This chapter seems to complement the missing of the *Laozi* Chs.1 and 25 in the *Sun-Eon*.

mean *yong* as utility or function.²³⁰ This usage seems contrary to the usage in the *Sun-Eon* Chs. 3 and 19. Then should we think that Yulgok's *ti* has the two contrasting usages – substance and corporeal body or that Yulgok's usage deviates from the usual Neo-Confucian usage? As is discussed presently, the meaning of *ti* cannot be cleft to substance and corporeal body; both meanings are dispersed on the same spectrum, i.e., relatively different. The conversation below between Zhu Xi and his student provides a clue:

A student asked, “Master Shangcai 上蔡 [i.e., Xie Liangzuo 謝良佐, 1050-1103] told that ritual (*li* 禮) and music were different but shared the same *ti*. This means that the heart-mind is *ti*; reverence (*jing* 敬) and harmony are *yong*. However, in the collective commentary, it is said that reverence is *ti*; harmony is *yong*. Why is it so? Zhu Xi said, “If the discussion is in light of the heart-mind, then the heart-mind would be *ti*, and reverence and harmony would be *yong*. If we discuss harmony in light of reverence, then reverence would be *ti*, and harmony would be *yong*. **Generally, *ti-yong* relationship is inexhaustibly applicable, thereby moving around just like this.** For example, if we look at the north from the south, then the north is the north; the south is the south. If we move and stand in the north, then there would be another north and south at the spot indeed. **The *ti-yong* relationship is not fixed. Accordingly, this case's *ti-yong* relationship is applicable to this case; that *ti-yong* relationship to that case.** This principle is inexhaustible to the end, and therefore, it is applicable to all directions and each and every thread and thrum of things is co-threaded.” Zhu Xi drew circles in the air by a finger [in a gesture] and said, “Obviously, if there is an [ontological] layer, there is another [successive ontological] layer. Whatever way is taken to tell this truth, the conclusion is the same. For example, if we talk about the two modes [of *qi*], *taiji* would be *taiji* (the Great Ultimate; *ti*), and the two modes would be *yong*; if we talk about the four images, then the two modes would be tantamount to *taiji*, and the four images would be *yong*; if we talk about the eight trigrams, then the four images would be tantamount to *taiji*, and the eight trigrams would be *yong*.”

童問,“上蔡云,‘禮樂異用而同體,’是心爲體,敬和爲用。集注又云,敬爲體,和爲用,其不同何也?”曰,“自心而言,則心爲體,敬和爲用;以敬對和而言,則敬爲體,和爲用。大抵體用無盡時,只管恁地移將去。如自南而視北,則北爲北;南爲南。移向北立,則北中又自有南北。體用無定,這處體用在這裏,那處體用在那裏。這道理儘無窮,四方八面無不是,千頭萬緒相貫串。”以指旋,曰,“分明一層了,又一層,橫說也如此,堅說也如此。翻來覆去說,都如此。如以兩儀言,則太極是太極,兩儀是用;以四象言,則兩儀是太極,四象是用;以八卦言,則四象又是太極,八卦又是用。”(ZY 22:65)

As seen in the above, *ti* needs to be understood as the primary – basic matter in question; *yong* as the secondary – derivative matter, which are, however, changeable

²³⁰ Obviously, this usage of *ti* and *yong* is compatible with Wang Bi's usage (*ti/yong* as body and the use). Alan Chan points out the example, “taking *wu* as the utility” (*wuyiweiyong* 無以為用 or *yiwu weiyong* 以無為用) from Chs. 1, 11, and 38. Refer to Alan Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 65-68.

according to our concern. Hence, we can see that Sima Guang's usage of *ti/yong* concept is not totally different from the Cheng-Zhu usage and that even in Zhu Xi, the *ti-yong* concept does not have a fixed meaning but has a heuristic nature.²³¹

Now we may think that the concept of *ti/yong* has an affinity with the concept of "root – branch" (*bon-mall/ben-mo* 本末), provided that *ti* and *yong* are the primary and derivative matters, respectively²³² and that the referential meaning of *ti/yong* and *ben/mo* are flexible and

²³¹ Also refer to *ZY* 6:20, 6:21, 6:22, etc. In these paragraphs, Zhu Xi seems to contend, first, that the basic meaning of *ti* is 'body or individual thing itself'; that of *yong* is the 'use or function' (for example, eye and seeing, ear and hearing, body and action, etc), and, next, that philosophical *ti/yong* can have various examples as the basic usage, and therefore, the referential meanings of *ti* and *yong* depend on the initial definitions; if *yin* is defined as *ti*, then *yang* would be *yong* and *vice versa*.

²³² The *ben/mo* concept is shown in the *Great Learning*, "Things have roots and branches; affairs have the endings and beginnings (物有本末; 事有終始)." Zhu Xi compares the relationship between *taiji* and other things to the incremental process of 'tree'; for instance, seed, sprout, stem, branches, fruits, and many seeds. (*ZY* 75:88) This example reminds us of the *ben/mo* concept that has also the image of tree. It is to this effect that Neo-Confucianism and Yulgok's *Sun-Eon* can find a relationship with Wang Bi's thought (*chongben ximo* 崇本息末; Cherishing the root and Nurturing the branches). "The *Laozi* can be summarized into a phrase. Oh! It is none other than cherishing the root and nurturing the branches (*chongben ximo*)" (老子之書, 其幾乎可一言而蔽之。噫! 崇本息末而已矣。)(*Laozi zhilue*, *WBJJ*, p. 198) For Wang Bi, the root (*ben*) of all beings in the universe (branches, *mo*) is *Dao*, which is the (absolute) One and yet non-being (*wu*). As far as the root – *Dao* has the qualities of formlessness (*wu-xing*) and namelessness (*wu-ming*), i.e. non-being, Wang Bi's *Dao* concept can be thought to have such qualities that can be compared to the Neo-Confucian usage of '*ti*' as *li* (*Dao*); *wu* and the congenial terminologies (*wuwei*, *wuming*, *wuxing*, and the like) are comparable to the original and concealed state (*ti*) of *li*, whereas the One, the origin and master, the Great ultimate are comparable to the applied and revealed effects or properties (*yong*) of *li*. However, it has to be mentioned that I do not mean that Wang Bi ascribed *wu* to *ti* as the substance. As Alan Chan pointed out, the direct association of Neo-Confucian *ti/yong* concept to Wang Bi's *ti/yong* is problematic; in Wang Bi, "*ti/yong*" should be regarded as '(physical) body/its utility (use).' (Alan Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 65-68.) Due to the metaphysical nature of Wang Bi's thought, the terms of "*ti/yong*" in his commentary have reminded readers of Neo-Confucian usage – '(metaphysical) substance/its function.' For example, Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, p. 323; Zhang Danian, *ibid.*, p. 243. This kind of understanding can be traced back to Tang Yongtong, the forefather of modern scholarship in Wang Bi studies; however, Tang does not explicitly say that Wang Bi's *ti/yong* concept is the same as or the origin of Neo-Confucian *ti/yong* concept, although he uses '*benti*' and 'substance'; rather, Tang explains that *ben/mo* 本末 (root/branches) concept can be understood in light of *ti/yong* concept. (Refer to *Weijin xuanxue lunkao* 魏晉玄學論稿 and *Weijin xuanxue tingke biji* 魏晉玄學聽課筆記, *Tangyongto quanji* 湯用彤全集 (Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1999), volume 4.)

fuzzy, depending on the contexts.²³³ And, as seen earlier, *ben* and *ti* are combined into one word, *ben-ti*, which represents *li* (*Dao*)’s original state that cannot be sensed by our physical faculty.²³⁴ When it comes to *yong*, Yulgok uses the combined term, *myo-yong/miao-yong* (marvelous function) rather than *mal-yong/mo-yong* (derivative function); Yulgok tries to avoid depreciating the value of the concrete or practical so as to emphasize the wondrous unity of noumenon and phenomenon, the unseen and the seen, the concealed and the revealed: “Wondrous truth of *ti* and *yong*’s sharing the same origin and of no gap between the revealed and the concealed.” (*SE* Ch. 19) This can relate to his *li-qi* philosophy and four-word-thesis (*litong-kiguk/litong-qiju*) that take cognizance of both the ontological source (*bonche/benti*) and cosming generation and changes (*yuhaeng/liuxing*).²³⁵

2. The concept of “*de*” and Human nature

2-1) *De as xing*

²³³ This is not to deny the usual usage of the concepts, for example, *ti* and *ben* as *li*. However, since Neo-Confucians are aware of the nature of these concepts – flexible and heuristic rather than fixed and explanatory, they do not allocate a chapter to either of the concepts in various companions and anthologies for Neo-Confucianism.

²³⁴ For Wang Bi, this would be none other than *Dao* as *wu* and *ben*.

²³⁵ It is also comparable to the *Laozi* Ch. 2 – “Being and non-being give birth to each other” (*you wu xiangsheng* 有無相生) and Wang Bi’s thesis, “cherishing the root (*wu*) and nurturing the branches (*you*).” In order to ensure an objective explanation, it needs to be said that even when Neo-Confucians use the term, *mo-yong* they do not look down upon the value of *mo-yong*; if they deny the value of *mo-yong*, they would have to deny the value of the society and practical matters as well. However, it is true that Neo-Confucians introduce a negative meaning of *mo-yong* when they need to criticize people’s commitment to selfish desire. This is also found in Wang Bi’s *xi-mo* (nurturing the branches) concept; *xi* can be interpreted as either nurturing or suffocating (suppression), according to the context. But I think that ‘nurture’ may include the meaning of ‘discipline,’ so that we may as well use ‘nurturing’ for the standard translation of *xi*.

In the previous chapter, we discussed how Yulgok understands such key concepts as *Dao* and non-being in the *Laozi* by drawing on Neo-Confucian philosophy. Although such concepts are usually considered theoretical, it has been observed that Yulgok's understanding of such concepts is not indifferent to moral practice in that they simultaneously pertain to both descriptive and normative truth. As has been shown briefly in the previous chapter, Yulgok's comparison of mirror to heart-mind is a good example; *Dao* and non-being relate to the heart-mind of human beings, implicating moral import. In relation to this, Yulgok's interpretation of “*de* 德” (attributes, power, virtue, and particular focus)²³⁶ concept and the related issues will be discussed, in this section.

In the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 2 (*Laozi* Ch. 51), Yulgok clearly situates and defines the concept of *de* in both the *Laozi* and Neo-Confucianism:

Dao gives births [to all things]; Virtues (de) [of all things] nourish [themselves]; things take shapes; tendencies get formed. Therefore, none of ten thousand things does not pay respect to Dao and cherish de. [The so-called] respectability of Dao and nobleness of de are, generally, not dubbed [by someone else] but constantly self-so (ziran)
 道生之하고 德畜之하고 物形之하고 勢成之라. 是以萬物이 莫不尊道 而貴德하나니
 道之尊과 德之貴는 夫莫之命 而常自然이니라.

Dao is the Way of Heaven and that by which (suoyi) to produce things; the de is the shapes and bodies of Dao, which is called Nature (seong/xing 性). Without Dao, humans and things would not have anything to originate from; without de, [they] would not have anything by which to follow li and naturally nourish themselves (jayang/ziyang 自養). Accordingly, it is said that Dao gives birth; de nourishes. Things

²³⁶ James Legge (*attributes*); Wing-tsit Chan, D. C. Lau, Philip J. Ivanhoe (*virtue*); Arthur Waley (*power*); Roger T. Ames (*particularity* or *focus*) For a brief review of the English translation of *de*, see Erin M. Cline, Two interpretations of *De* in the *Daodejing*, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31:2 (June 2004), pp. 219-233.

For a discussion of *de*, I will use the following: Philip J. Ivanhoe, The Concept of *de* (“Virtue”) in the *Laozi*, *Religious and philosophical aspects of the Laozi*, ed. Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany: SUNY, 1999); David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: self, truth, and transcendence in Chinese and Western culture* (Albany: SUNY, 1998) esp. Chs. 2, 3, 4, and 7; Roger T. Ames, “Putting the *Te* (*De*) Back into Taoism,” in J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames ed., *Nature in Asian Tradition of Thought* (Albany: SUNY, 1989), pp. 113-144.

In this thesis, the original term, *de*, is frequently used. When an English translation of *de* is needed, I usually adopt “virtue” that is conventionally used. However, I will clarify the context where my translation, “virtue” is situated, whenever necessary.

take [various] shapes, and tendencies are interactively caused [by various things with various *de*]. These are all based on *Dao* and *de*. Consequently, *Dao* and *de* are most respectable and noble.

道即天道, 所以生物者也. 德則道之形體也, 乃所謂性也. 人物 非道 則無以資生, 非德 則無以循理以自養. 故曰道生德畜也. 物之成形, 勢之相因, 皆本於道德, 故道德最爲 尊貴也.

Notable is that Yulgok compares the relationship between *Dao* and *de* with that between *li* and *xing* by clarifying the concept of *de*. Yulgok defines *de* as the concretized shapes and bodies of *Dao*, clarifying the relationship between *Dao* and *de* as the universal ground or principle (“*that by which* to produce things”; *li*) and its reified and particularized forms in each and every thing (*xing*), and he identifies *de* with *xing* in Neo-Confucianism, suggesting the remarkable affinity between Daoism and Neo-Confucianism in terms of an integrated understanding of the diverse dispositions of humans and things, i.e., theory on how various and yet correlated ten thousand things and their dispositions are.

Yulgok’s comparison is neither accidental nor far-fetched; it appears to effectively capture and amalgamate the representative features of (Neo) Confucianism and Daoism. As Ivanhoe pointed out, the concept of *de* in the *Analects* means (moral) ‘virtue’ as the “special power” and “distinctive effect.” Such virtue is possessed by humans, exerting influence on human beings, not other beings, while the *de* in the *Laozi* has the similar meanings but concerns both human and other creatures including sentient and non-sentient beings.²³⁷ Neo-Confucian, particularly Zhu Xi’s concept of *xing* shares the common essence (*Dao*) of all creatures in the universe; it is the source of the cardinal virtues (humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustfulness; *ren* 仁, *yi* 義, *li* 禮, *zhi* 智, and *xin* 信), and people who fully realize *xing* can influence both the human society and natural world:

Zhu Xi’s comment:

By the term, ‘nature (xing)’ we refer to what is imparted by the ordinance of Heaven (tianming 天命) (On the

Xing is li (= Dao = Heaven). Heaven transforms and generates all myriad things by using yin/yang and the five phases. In doing so, it brings into being the

²³⁷ Ivanhoe, *ibid.*, p. 244.

practice of the mean (Zhongyong 中庸) **Ch. 1**)
天命之謂性。

...One who is able to fully realize his inborn nature can thereby bring to full realization the nature of other people; one who is able to bring to full realization the nature of others is thereby able to bring to full realization the nature of all existing things; and one who is able to bring to full realization the nature of all existing things can partake thereby in the transformative and generative process of Heaven and Earth. (Ch. 22)²³⁸

唯天下至誠，為能盡其性；能盡其性，則能盡人之性；能盡人之性，則能盡物之性；能盡物之性，則可以贊天地之化育；可以贊天地之化育，則可以與天地參矣。

shapes of things by using *qi*, and *li* is imparted, too. 性即理也。天以陰陽五行化生萬物，氣以成形，而理亦賦焉...

Consequently, humans and other things are produced, and they gain their imparted *li*-s, based on which they form such virtues as steadiness, compliance, and the five virtues (*ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *xin*). These (such virtues) are called “nature”... The natures of human and other things are [originally] also the same as my nature; however, the respective endowed physical constitutions are different, and thereby their natures are different. “Full realization” means that her/his knowledge is never imperfect and her/his behavior is never immoderate... “Partaking in Heaven and Earth” means that she/he can stand with Heaven and Earth and forms the [great] three [of the universe].)

於是人物之生，因各得其所賦之理，以為健順五常之德，所謂性也。人物之性，亦我之性，但以所賦形氣不同而有異耳。能盡之者，謂知之無不明而處之無不當也...與天地參，謂與天地並立為三也。

Hence, the Neo-Confucian concept, *xing* is not only the natures of individual beings but also key to the acquisition of the special power or distinctive effect that concerns not only human beings but also all myriad things, as the *de* concept in Daoism does. In other words, the concept of *xing* concerns ‘what has to be pursued and achieved’ (power and effect) as well as what is given. To this effect, Yulgok’s bridging of Daoist *de* and Neo-Confucian *xing* can be thought to reflect both Neo-Confucianism and Daoism, showing an innovative point.²³⁹

²³⁸ Translation is adapted from Andrew Plaks, *ibid.*, p. 24 (Ch. 1); p. 44 (Ch. 22)

²³⁹ This becomes clear when compared with Heshang gong and Wang Bi; neither Heshang gong nor Wang Bi clarifies the relationship between *xing* and *de* despite the fact that both use such terms as “*xingming* 性命” (inborn nature and life) in their comments on the *Laozi*. (Dong Sijing does not explicitly associate the concept of *xing* with *de* either.) Given the close relationship between *Dao* and *xing/xingming*, *de* and *xing/xingming* seem to have a necessary connection. In their commentaries, Wang Bi uses “*xing*” 23 times and “*xingming*” twice, while Heshang gong uses “*xing*” 11 times and “*xingming*” 5 times. (I did not count in “*xing*” at the chapter titles in the *Zhangju*; the titles were not added by Heshang gong himself) Both *xing* and *xingming* mean ‘nature,’ ‘natural disposition,’ or ‘attribute’ of human beings and other things, and therefore are connected with the concept of *Dao*. On the other hand, Wang Bi and Heshang gong seem to understand *de* as the essence of everything (“the One” (*yi* = *Dao*), *Zhangju* Ch. 51; “That which things gain [from *Dao*] (*wu zhi suode* 物之所

However, as seen in Zhu's words, *xing* is concerned with the universal essence and the particular dispositions. Likewise, as seen in the *Sun-Eon*'s chapter in question (*SE* Ch. 2), in order for multifarious things to "nourish themselves naturally in accord with *Dao* or *li*" (*jayang/ziyang*), they have to satisfy their respective dispositions, i.e., the actual conditions of them; otherwise, they cannot practically follow *li*. At this juncture, we need to be reminded of Yulgok's four-word thesis, *litong-kiguk/litong-qiju* 理通氣局 (*Li* passes through [universally] and *qi* gets limited [to the particulars]), based on which Yulgok explains the relationship between the natures (*xing*-s) of multifarious species and *li* as their common ground.²⁴⁰ When Yulgok defines *de* as the particularized shapes and bodies of *Dao*, it seems to be obvious that he assumes the concept of *qi*. *Qi* is the only means by which *Dao* (*li*) reveals itself in the world and takes the various shapes – *de* or *xing*:

The reason why human nature is not animal (and plant) nature is that *qi* gets limited [to the particulars] (*kiguk/qiju*); the reason why the Principle (*li*) of the human being can be identified with that of animal (plant) is that *li* passes through [universally] (*litong*). 人之性 非物之性者, 氣之局也. 人之理即物之理者, 理之通也.²⁴¹

In the above passage, Yulgok holds that the principles in humans and animals are fundamentally the same; however, the actualized forms (*de* or *xing*) of the same principle in various species are multifarious and particular. In other words, *li* (*Dao*) exists not beyond but with/under the actual world of *qi* in such conditioned forms as various *de* or *xing*. It is none other than the particularization or limitation by *qi* that renders a place in the world to *li* (*Dao*). Due to the particularization by *qi*, *Dao* becomes *de*, which are the dispositions of individuals; so far as the dispositions of individuals (*de* and *xing*) assure us of individuals as the specific

得),” Wang’s commentary on Ch. 51) and excellence (power or effect) which is rooted in *Dao*.

²⁴⁰ Refer to II-3. *Yulgok’s metaphysics of Li and Qi: Clarity and Ambiguity*. Particularly 3-2) *Yulgok’s self-attainment on liyi-fenshu and problem of Buddhism* and 3-4) *Clarity and ambiguity of Yulgok on li and qi, and later unfolding*.

²⁴¹ “Yeo seonghowon” 與成浩原, Seo (2), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), p. 98.

individuals, the *de* concept in this context is comparable to Roger T. Ames' understanding of *de* as "*principium individuationis*" (principle of individuation)²⁴² or "*particular foci* in the (common) field."²⁴³ When Yulgok says, "Without *de*, [they] would not have anything by which to follow *li* and nourish themselves," he seems to mean that *de* and *xing* are the only ways to fathom *Dao*, and that *Dao* can be put into practice only by fully complying with their natures and conforming to the spontaneous courses of their lives (*jayang/ziyang*; autonomous nourishment) rather than obeying the universal and abstract principle at the expense of the particularities of individuals.²⁴⁴

At this point, we need to discuss such concepts as *ziran* (naturalness or spontaneity) and *wuwei* (no (deliberate) action or "nonassertive actions"²⁴⁵), which are the key concepts in our understanding of the concept of *de* and its realization. According to the *Laozi* itself (*SE* Ch. 2), *Dao* (*li*) and *de* (*xing*) are of great significance ontologically and axiologically; yet the significance is not consciously conferred by anyone but naturally so (*ziran*) without doing anything deliberate (*wuwei*). Further, the way *Dao* (*li*) and *de* (*xing*) work is *ziran* and *wuwei*. This is also shown in the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 5 (*Laozi* Ch. 10, Cf. Chs. 2 and 51):

[Heaven and earth] give birth to and bring up things, but they do not possess things; they do something but do not presume on it; they raise things but do not preside over things.

²⁴² Roger T. Ames, Putting the *Te* (*De*) Back into Taoism, *Nature in Asian Tradition of Thought*, *ibid.*, p. 127.

²⁴³ David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁴⁴ Being parallel with Ames' understanding of Daoism, (Ames, *ibid.*, pp. 127-129; Hall and Ames, *ibid.*, pp. 58-67) Yulgok is likely to think that the realization of the overarching and universal value is not possible until the particularized individuals' dispositions are fully realized without interfering with one another, i.e., the parity of everything (*qiwu* 齊物) is guaranteed. This conjecture seems, however, to be beyond the boundary of the text of the *Sun-Eon*. Moreover, it does not seem to be viable to make such a conjecture, given Zhu Xi and Yulgok's *li-qi* philosophy that the *qi* constitution of human beings is considered most wholesome ("right and transparent"), while those of animals and plants are considered "partial and opaque." Refer to 3-1) *Zhu Xi on li and qi* and 3-3) *Litong-kiguk/litong-qiju and the traces of Daoist metaphysics*.

²⁴⁵ David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 52.

生之畜之호대, 生而不有하며, 爲而不恃하며, 長而不宰하니.

Heaven and earth give birth to [all] things, but they do not possess merits; although they interact to create and transform [all the things], they do not presume on their strength; although they raise and nourish all the things, they do not have a mind to preside [over all the things] (*jujae ji shim/zhuzai zhi xin* 主宰之心). The profound virtue (*hyeondeok/xuande* 玄德) of sages is the same as that of heaven and earth. The profound virtue is the virtue that is most sincere, deep, and subtle.

天地生物, 而不有其功, 運用造化, 而不恃其力, 長畜群生, 而無有主宰之心. 聖人之玄德, 亦同於天地而已, 玄德至誠淵微之德也.(*SE* Ch. 5)

As seen in the above, the virtue or attribute (*de*) of heaven and earth (the universe), i.e., *Dao (li)* possesses such characteristics that are comparable to *ziran* and *wuwei*. In the *Laozi*, it is a given fact that *Dao (li)* and *de (xing)* occupy supreme positions in our grasp of the world; however, *Dao* does not have physicality; therefore, the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao per se* are just conceptual and, further, ineffable. Practically, *ziran* and *wuwei* are recognizable and effable when *de* or *xing* that has physicality (*qi*) is involved. This reading is also supported by the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 37 as well as Chs. 2 and 5, and his *litong kikuk/ litong qiju* thesis:

The Way of Heaven (*cheon ji do/tian zhi dao* 天之道) *does not compete, but wins well...*

Wengong says, “[The Heavenly *Dao*] lets things (*mul/wu* 物) be spontaneous (*ziran*), but things cannot contravene it (*Dao*).”

溫公曰, “任物自然, 而物莫能違.”(*SE* Ch. 37)

Accordingly, *ziran* and *wuwei* can be considered to be not only metaphysically and ideally constructed concepts but also physically and practically observable inclinations of things. In other words, for Yulgok the natures (*xing-s*) of human and other things contain the common inclination to the ideal of *ziran* and *wuwei*, i.e., the accedence or “deference” (Ames) to *Dao*; the “profound virtue of sages” (*hyeondeok/xuande*), which is comparable to that of Heaven and Earth, refers to this common inclination as well as the ideal to achieve (“the special *de* or power,” Ivanhoe); if there is no common potential in each and every thing, there would be no way for others to emulate the sages. However, the practical and congenial actions to reify the common potentiality, namely, the ideal of *ziran* and *wuwei* cannot but be various so far as the *qi*-constitutions of individual agents are various; *Dao*’s self-so-ness and non-action is

reified and revealed through the self-so-ness, spontaneity, and non-deliberation in every actual being (*qi*, *wu*). In this sense, to follow *de* or *xing* means to embody and accede to particularity as well as the universal common ground simultaneously just as *ziran* and *wuwei* pertain to both physicality and meta-physicality.

2-2) *De (xing) as originated from Dao (li)*

A. *Dao (li) as ziran and wuwei: good or neither good nor evil?*

One issue to address at this point is how we view the stern reality of the world caused by various creatures' natures and spontaneous actions. Yulgok explains that such tendencies of the world are made by the interaction between various beings that have various dispositions (*shi zhi xiangyin* 勢之相因, *SE* Ch. 2); according to the definition, the dispositions of humans and animals originate from spontaneous and non-deliberate *Dao (li)*, and therefore such tendencies can also be viewed as originating from *Dao*. If this is the case, would the *prima facie* immorality of the world be ascribed to *Dao*, or rather the supposed immorality of *Dao*'s spontaneity and no (deliberate) action? In principle, *Dao* as *ziran* and *wuwei* does not have consciousness or intention to be assessed as moral or immoral; if it has, it cannot be explicated as self-so-ness (spontaneity) and no deliberate action (nonassertive action):

Dao emulates self-so-ness (*ziran* 自然)
道法自然 (*Laozi* Ch. 25)

Dao is always doing nothing (*wuwei* 無爲); however, it leaves nothing undone.
道常無爲而無不爲 (*Laozi* Ch. 37)

Dao does not explicitly impose anything normative on the world although it leaves nothing undone. This “*nonimpositional*”²⁴⁶ and yet omnipotent characteristic of *Dao* may be, then, understood as trans-ethicity which is supposed to make all things possible and yet ultimately realize “harmony” (*chongqi* 沖氣, *he* 和, and *chonghe* 沖和, *SE* Ch. 1). In other

²⁴⁶ David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 52.

words, *Dao (li)* is neither good nor evil in that it has no intention or deliberation to do something unlike sentient beings; nevertheless, *Dao* can be said to bring both good and bad into being in that all kinds of actions taken by all creatures are the various modes of manifested *de* or *xing* – the reified *Dao* although it functions as the key to the optimal natural state which can be ultimately regarded as ‘good.’ Once we accept this understanding of *Dao*, then we have to consider every nature of events and things to originate from *Dao* for the moment; even the nature of fight or warfare should be regarded as a mode of *Dao (li)*. Ch. 14 of the *Sun-Eon* (*Laozi* Ch. 76) reads as:

Ch. 14, in conjunction with the previous chapter’s discussion about how to win a war, extends and elucidates the meaning of benevolence and flexibility’s overcoming sturdiness and violence. Generally, the so-called ‘flexibility’ (*yu/rou* 柔) refers to the [outer] shape of *yin/ren* 仁 (humanity) and *ja/ci* 慈 (benevolence) only; it does not mean that it is flexible and weak all through. If it is flexible and weak all through, how can it overcome sturdiness and violence? And what is meant by ‘overcoming’ is nothing other than the result of the natural course of *li* and *se/shi* [i.e., the tendency of situation]; it does not mean that she/he has a mind to overcome others, and thereby [deliberately] tries to be flexible and weak.

右第十四章，因上章戰勝之說，而推明慈柔勝剛暴之義。夫所謂柔者，只言仁慈之形耳，非一於柔弱而已。若一於柔弱，則豈能勝剛暴哉。且其勝之者，亦出於理勢之當然耳，非有心於欲勝而故為柔弱也。 (*SE* Ch. 14)

The efficacy of crafty tactics in the field of battle is the undeniable and natural truth (*Dao*). Whether or not the arts and wiles for warfare are used by good people, *Dao* of warfare works for the ones who know or, by chance, fit in it. This is “the natural course of *li* and *se/shi*.” However, this is not all; it should be mentioned that immoral victory, regimes, and tyrants cannot last for long. By commenting on the *Laozi* Chs. 30, 31, 57, and 58, Yulgok points out the peril of militarism, machinations, and autocratic Legalism (*fajia*); they are deemed self-destructive rather than perpetually effective. (*SE* Chs. 31, 33, and 34) And this is possibly what Yulgok means by “the natural course of *li* and *se/shi*.” The *Sun-Eon* Ch. 37 (*Laozi* Chs. 72 and 73) and Ch. 38 (*Laozi* Chs. 77 and 79) appear to support this understanding:

37-[1] The Heavenly *Dao* (*cheon ji dol/tian zhi dao* 天之道) *does not compete, but wins well; 37-[2] it does not speak, but responds well; 37-[3] Although it is not asked to do so, but operates of itself. 37-[4] The Heavenly net is broad and wide; it looks sparse, but it never misses anything. 37-[5] If common people are not scared of horrors, big horrors would befall them.*

天之道난 不爭而善勝하며, 不言而善應天하며, 不召而自來하나니. 天網恢恢하야 疏而不失하나니라. 民不畏威면 則大威至하나니라.

37-[1] Wengong says, “[The Heavenly *Dao*] lets things be spontaneous (*ziran*), but things cannot contravene it.”

溫公曰, “任物自然, 而物莫能違.”

37-[2] Mr. Dong says, “Has Heaven ever said (ordered)? [Nevertheless,] the four seasons come and go by turns; when it comes to giving fortune and misfortune in reward for good and immoderation, it is flawless indeed.”

董氏曰, “天何言哉! 四時行焉, 其於福善禍淫之應, 信不差.”

37-[3] Mr. Dong says, “The coming of spirits can be originally from all directions; it is [so seamlessly natural] as the cold comes in when the heat goes away. How can it be that they visit us after we call them?”

董氏曰, “神之格思, 本無向背, 如暑往則寒來, 夫豈召而後之哉!”

37-[4] Mr. Dong says, “[Only] after one tries to exhaustively observe the results and changes [of things], one can know that although it (the Heavenly net) is wide and big, it is [also] minute and detailed so that it does not miss anything.”

董氏曰, “要終盡變然後, 知其雖廣大, 而微細不遺也.”

37-[5] People ought to be scared of horror just as they are about disease. Otherwise, formidable big horrors will befall them. We should not consider the Way of Heaven as unconscious [of our thought and behaviors].

民當畏威如疾 如不畏威 則必有可畏之大威至矣 不可以天道為無知也.

38-[1] *The Way of Heaven is just like the stretching of an arc; it presses down the higher part, but pulls up the lower part; it diminishes the surplus, but makes up the shortage. Therefore, the Way of Heaven diminishes the surplus and supplements the shortage. 38-[2] The Way of Heaven has no intimacy [with certain people], and it is constantly on the side of good people.*

天之道이 其猶張弓與인더! 高者抑之하고, 下者舉之하며, 有餘者損之하고, 不足者補之하나니. 天之道난 損有餘而補不足이니라. 天道無親하야 常與善人하나니라.

38-[1] Mr. Dong says, “The Way of Heaven is not partial (*musu/wusi* 無私), and constantly takes a mean course. Hence, it is the Heavenly Way that [a culminating] fullness calls for decrease; humility wins a bonus (addition); it is timely.

董氏曰, “天道無私, 常適於中. 故滿招損害, 謙受益, 時乃天道.”

38-[2] The *Shujing* says, “The majestic Heaven does not have intimacy. If one can pay respect to it, one can be intimate with it.” This is the meaning [of the text].

書曰, “皇上無親, 克敬惟親,” 即此意也.

As seen in the above, Yulgok does not lose optimism about the normative function or effect of *Dao*. *Dao* does not have consciousness, so it is objective; consequently, it can be

regarded as unprejudiced and impartial (*musa/wusi*) more than anything else. (Comments on *SE* Ch. 38) The unprejudiced and impartial operation of *Dao* continues to cure the malfunction of both human society and nature, thereby making them reach the optimal balance in the end; the whole process for the balance occurs in the form of ‘spontaneity or autonomy’ (*ziran*) of things (Comment on 37-[1]). It should be noted, however, that *Dao* is not a conscious, morally impositional being although it can be regarded as moral will in the shoes of human. This ambiguity permeates all comments of the *Sun-Eon* Chs. 37 and 38. Yulgok deals with the same topic elsewhere as follows:

Generally, the Heavenly principle (*cheonli/tianli* 天理) is true and not absurd, and it is purely good and never evil. Gentlemen comply with this, so as to be fortunate; petty men are adverse to this, so as to be unfortunate. These are all natural responses [of the Way of heaven]. There is no such a thing (*yilmul/yiwu* 一物) that has control over fortune and misfortune. It is, [however,] none other than what *li* makes *that by which* (*soyi/suoyi* 所以) heaven is heaven; human is human; good causes good fortune; evil causes ill fortune. Mastership [of the Heavenly principle] (*jujae/zhuzai* 主宰) seems to be existent although originally it does not. So we are forced to call it “[Controlling the universe as] emperor” (*je/di* 帝). “Emperor” is *li*.

蓋天理者, 眞實無妄, 純善無惡者也. 君子順之則吉; 小人悖之則凶. 此皆自然之應也. 非有一物操其柄而禍福之也. 天之所以爲天; 人之所以爲人; 善之所以爲吉; 惡之所以爲凶, 莫非是理之所爲也. 本無主宰, 而似有主宰. 故強名之曰, 帝. 帝卽理也.²⁴⁷

Yulgok understands ‘*li*’ (*Dao*) as the rationale (“*that by which*”) behind the natural course of the universe rather than “a thing” (*yilmul/yiwu*) that has the consciousness for controlling the world (*jujae/zhuzai*) like an emperor,²⁴⁸ nevertheless, *li* should be regarded as

²⁴⁷ “Gwishin saseng chaek” 鬼神死生策 (Treatise on ghost and numinous, death and life), Jap-jeo (Various writing) (I), the complementary annex (*Seupyu*) of *CWYG*, *kwon* 4; *KTYJ* (IV), p. 365.

²⁴⁸ This thought of Yulgok is obviously influenced by a dialogue between Zhu Xi and his disciple:

Question: That one’s destiny (a mandate from Heaven) is not the same as others’ destinies is, I think, not because there is [someone] who endows people with their destiny so, but the interminglement of the two *qi*-s has various modes in which one’s destiny is determined, and therefore, not the same. All these things are beyond the control of human beings. Is it therefore called a mandate from Heaven?

Answer: It is just so [naturally determined] as [rivers] flow out of the great source; it is not that there is really someone who is vested in power to do so. How can there be a

concerning normativeness – moral reward for good or bad deed. In other words, *li* does not take a deliberate action to reward moral deed, but it is, by its nature, supposed to be advantageous to compliant moral agents and disadvantageous to rebellious agents. In this sense, *li* is descriptive and yet normative; amoral and yet eventually moral.

However, as seen, Yulgok says that *li* is “*purely good and never evil*.” This seems to counter my argument of the amorality of *li* because Yulgok seems to contrast good and evil. But if we take into consideration the absence of moral consciousness in *li*, “*purely good*” can be understood to mean that *li* is, as “*that by which* everything is so,” eventually essential to normativeness as discussed earlier; on the other hand, what is meant by “*never evil*” is that since *li* does not have an impositional mind to control over the world (*jujae ji shim/zhuzai zhi xin*), even an unacceptable reality in human society and brutality in nature cannot be interpreted as designed by the evil intention of *li* although *li* as “*that by which*” can be said to be eventually concerned with such a stern reality. The foregone discussion is well summed up in the below letters between Yulgok and his friend, Seong Hon:

Question from Seong Hon's letter: Yesterday I went to the creek *Yuki* (willow) and splashed the water with my hand, thinking about it, ‘It is a matter of *li* the fact that water flows downward; when it comes to splashing it, the splash is done by my hand, which is what *qi* did.’ If so, then can we think that there are occasions in which [only]

person in the above who orders people to do so? The words in the *Shijing* and the *Shujing* look as if there is someone above, for example, such words as “The emperor got in wrath.” [*Shujing* V: bk.3] [However,] it is also that *li* is just so. There does not exist something nobler than *li*, therefore [*li*] is named (compared to) ‘emperor.’ [In the phrase,] “The majestic emperor grants his sincere remark down to common people,” [*Shujing* IV:bk.3] ‘To grant (*jiang* 降)’ means mastership (*zhuzai*).

問, “命之不齊, 恐不是真有爲之賦予如此. 只是二氣錯綜參差, 隨其所值, 因各不齊. 皆非人力所與, 故謂之天所命否?” 曰, “只是從大原中流出來, 模樣似恁地, 不是真有爲之賦予者. 那得箇人在上面分付這箇! 詩書所說, 便似有箇人在上恁地, 如‘帝乃震怒’之類. 然這箇亦只是理如此. 天下莫尊於理, 故以帝名之. ‘惟皇上帝降衷於下民,’ 降, 便有主宰意…” (ZY 4:37)

However, it is notable that Zhu Xi connects *li*'s significance with the mastership (*zhuzai*), whereas Yulgok denies even the mastership of *li* because the word, mastership can connote consciousness or the heart-mind. But this is not a total repudiation of Zhu Xi but a reinforcement of Zhu's rationalistic aspect because Zhu himself says that the heart-mind relates to ‘mastership,’ but the heart-mind of Heaven means just *li*. (ZY 1:17)

qi functions (issues) and occasions when *li* and *qi* mutually operate (*bal/fa* 發; issue)? [Let us suppose that a certain person named] “*Li* 李” committed severe crimes and was extremely evil, but to the end, his life was not taken [for punishment by the heaven]. [One might say that] the heavenly *Dao* is not aware of this case. Then can we think that this is also the function (doing) of *qi*, [not *li*]? And then I had another thought, ‘If the doings of *qi* are not consistent and there is no *li*’s mastership over *qi*, then there would not be the brightness of the sun and moon, and, further, heaven and earth could have collapsed long ago. Isn’t this wrong?’

昨出柳磯,以手激水,而思之曰,‘水之就下,理也;至於激,而在手,氣所爲也。然則氣有作用時,有互發時耶? 李某之所爲,罪大惡極,而卒保首領,天道無知,是亦氣之作用耶?’ 既而又思曰,‘如以氣之所作無底定,而無理以爲主宰,則到今日月無光;天地墜落,已久矣,豈不誤耶?’²⁴⁹

Answer from Yulgok’s reply letter. From your proposition regarding the splashing of water at the creek *Yuki*, it can be said that you have observed concrete things and thought out *Dao* (*li*); but it seems still incomplete. That water runs downward is a matter of [natural] *li*; however, it is also a matter of [natural] *li* that when splashed, it goes up into the hand. If water only flowed downward and did not go upward even when splashed, that would be contrary to *li*. When it splashes upward into the hand, although it (the hand) is a matter of *qi*, that by which it splashes upward into the hand is a matter of *li*. How can we say that *qi* alone can function [without *li*]? Its splashing up into the hand is a matter of *li* as mounted on *qi*. Seeking only the original (ideal) state of *li* (*bonyeon ji li/ benran zhi li* 本然之理) other than practical states, i.e., *li*’s mounting on (being situated in) *qi* is definitely wrong. If one takes as the original state the cases in which *li* is mounted on *qi* but [the issuance] is contrary to the constant [nature], then it would be wrong. But if one sees that which is contrary to the constant [nature] and directly takes it as purely the product of *qi* alone and not something in which *li* is present, that is also wrong. [As you mentioned,] for an [evil man] to grow old and die peacefully in his room is certainly contrary to what is constantly regarded as reasonable. But if governance is unequal, and awards and punishments are not in accord with the proper norm, then it can be, indeed, said to fit in with *li* that evil men get their way and good ones suffer and perish. Mencius said, “That the small should serve the great and the weak serve the strong is natural.” Indeed, not taking into account the greatness or smallness of virtue but taking small or great only in terms of strength and weakness as that which determines victory or defeat, how could it be the original state of Heaven (*cheon ji bonyeon/ tian zhi benran* 天之本然; *li*)! It is just that he is speaking particularly in terms of the tendency of situations (*se/shi* 勢). If the tendency is inclined that way, then *li* works that way, and it is called [the meaning of] ‘Heaven’ (*cheon/tian* 天; natural). If this is the case, some evil guys manage to preserve their lives, one may say that such is not the original state of *li*. But if one says that it is the sole product of *qi* and has nothing to do with *li*, then it is wrong. Where in the world is there any *qi* apart from *li*?

柳磯激水之說,可謂見物思道矣,猶有所未盡也。夫水之就下,理也。激之則在手者,此亦理也。水若一於就下,雖激而不上,則爲無理也。邀之而在手者,雖氣,而所以激之而在手者,理也。烏可謂氣獨作用乎? 水之就下,本然之理也。激而在手,乘氣之理也。求

²⁴⁹ “Bu mundseo” 附問書 (Your previous question letter attached to my reply), 2nd Dap Seong Ho-Won 答成浩原, Seo (letters) (II), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), p. 75. I adapted the English translation from Michael C. Kalton et al., *The four-Seven Debate*, pp. 143-144.

本然於乘氣之外, 固不可. 若以乘氣而反常者, 謂之本然, 亦不可. 若見其反常, 而遂以爲氣獨作用, 而非理所在, 亦不可也. 某也之老死牖下, 固是反常. 但治道不升, 賞罰無章, 則惡人得志, 善人困窮, 固其理也. 孟子曰, “小役大弱役强者, 天也.” 夫不論德之大小, 而惟以小小大強弱爲勝負者, 此豈天之本然哉! 特以勢言之耳. 勢既如此, 則理亦如此, 故謂之天也. 然則某人之得保首領, 謂之非理之本然, 則可; 謂之氣獨爲之而無理, 則不可也. 天下安有理外之氣耶?²⁵⁰

Yulgok tries to maintain the trans-ethicality of *li* that originates from none other than the spontaneity (*ziran*) and non-impositionality (*wuwei*) of *li*; however, by introducing the concept of “originally-so-ness” (*bonyeon/benran* 本然), he tries to reserve ethicality for *li*. Possibly, the “originally-so-ness” is the place for morality in the realm of ‘self-so-ness.’ In other words, the “originally-so-ness” is another expression for *li*’s ultimate moral effect, which is gained in getting at the ideal balance of each and every thing and affair, and it can be thought to be a compromise between *li* as ‘that by which everything is so’ (trans-ethicality; *suoyiran*) and *li* as ‘that by which everything ought to be so’ (normativeness; *suodangran*).

B. *De (xing) and the heart-mind revisited*

Given Yulgok’s basic position that *li* functions as ‘that by which everything is so whether it is good or bad,’ he is likely to concur with the interpretive possibility of *xing* as being trans-ethical. In order to discuss this issue, we have to revisit the problem of the heart-mind because it is the locus of the reified *li* (*Dao*), namely, *xing (de)* in a human being (*SE* Chs.2 and 4) is the heart-mind:

It is called nature (*xing*) that which is endowed with by the Heavenly principle. *Xing* and *qi* combines, constituting the mastership over oneself, which is called the heart-mind (*xin*). The heart-mind responds to [external] events and things and expresses itself outwardly; it is called emotions (*qing*). *Xing* is the [un-manifested] substratum of the heart-mind; emotions are the [manifested] functions of the heart-mind. The heart-mind is the general name for *xing* as the not-yet-manifested (*miball/weifa* 未發) and *qing* as the already-manifested (*yiball/yifa* 已發), and therefore, it is said that the heart-mind comprises (or presides over; *tong* 統) *xing* and *qing* (*shim tong seong-jeong/xin tong xing-qing* 心統性情).

²⁵⁰ “Dap Seong Ho-Won” 2, Seo (letters) (II), *CWYG*, *kwon* 10; *KTYJ* (III), pp. 71-72. English translation is adapted from Michael C. Kalton et al., *ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

天理之賦於人者,謂之性;合性與氣而爲主宰於一身者,謂之心;心應事物而發於外者,謂之情.性是心之體;情是心之用.心是未發已發之總名,故曰心統性情.²⁵¹

Thus, when the heart-mind is discussed by Yulgok (and other Zhu Xi scholars), the concept of *xing/de* is underlain in the discussion, not to speak of *Dao/li*. In the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 3, Yulgok juxtaposes *Dao* and the heart-mind and shows their close relationship, in which the concept of *xing/de* is suggested:

Dao is always doing nothing, but nothing remains undone.
道常無爲호대 而無不爲니라.

3-[a] The doing of the Heaven in the above (*sangcheon ji jae/shangtian zhi zai* 上天之載) have neither sound nor smell. Nevertheless, the creation of all myriad things is rooted in this [affair of the Heaven], indeed.

3-[b] [It can be identified] in the case of human being (jaeyin/zairen 在人); [originally, human being] has no thought and no action, and it is tranquil and of no movement; but when [human being] senses [external beings], [the hear-mind of human being] eventually [can] penetrate into the reasons for all the things in the world.²⁵²
上天之載,無聲無臭,而萬物之生,實本於斯.在人,則無思、無爲、寂然、不動,感而遂通天下之故也. (*SE* Ch. 3)

In the above, Yulgok explains how *Dao* works generally in the world and functions particularly in human. According to the *Laozi*, *Dao* has no deliberate or impositional action, and therefore it is spontaneous and *vice versa*; nevertheless, it should be deemed to make possible everything. Yulgok explains that this paradoxical thesis of the *Laozi* can be compared to Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi's standpoint in **3-[a]** which is, in fact, adapted from Zhu Xi's comment on a work of Zhou Dunyi:

²⁵¹ "Yinshim doshim doseol" 人心道心圖說, Seol 說 (Argument), *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (III), pp. 305-306. This is Yulgok's summary of Zhu Xi's last version of theory on the heart-mind and (human) nature.

²⁵² This is adapted from the *Xici zhuan* A:10. As is presently discussed, Yulgok's meaning in the use of this sentence is slightly different from the original meaning; originally, the sentence begins with the character, "yi" 易, which means mainly the way of divination (*shifa* 筮法), whereas Yulgok changes "yi" as "jaeyin/zairen," which suggests that Yulgok extends the meaning of the original text to a general theory of human knowledge. However, this was not just Yulgok's invention but the usual practice of Neo-Confucians. Zhu Xi comments on such a practice that the applied meaning to human case makes sense, too. (*ZY* 75:53)

The doing of the Heaven in the above has neither sound nor smell. It is, however, the hinge and sinew (*shuniu* 樞紐) of creation and transformation [of the universe] and the root (*gendi* 根柢) of multifarious things. Hence, [Zhou Dunyi] says, “Non-Ultimate (the Ultimate of non-being) and yet the Great Ultimate” (*wuji er taiji* 無極而太極). There is not exist ‘Non-Ultimate’ again outside the Great Ultimate. 上天之載, 無聲無臭, 而實造化之樞紐, 品彙之根柢也。故曰, “無極而太極,” 非太極之外復有無極也。²⁵³

Although Yulgok does not quote the underlined part, his philosophical intent of using this paragraph of Zhu Xi is obvious; “No-action and yet the omnipotent action” (*wuwei er wubuwei*) is tantamount to a significant phrase of Neo-Confucianism, “Non-Ultimate and yet the Great Ultimate” (*wuji er taiji*). In fact, for Neo-Confucians including Yulgok, it is clear enough that “neither sound nor smell” stands for ‘Non-Ultimate’; the “hinge and sinew” and the “root” for ‘the Great Ultimate,’ as Chen Chun explains.²⁵⁴ Borrowing an expression from Yulgok, we can rephrase the thesis: “True non-being” (*jinnu/zhenwu*, metaphysical non-being) brings into being all physical beings and non-being.²⁵⁵ Hence, this true non-being can be called the “marvelous being” (*myoyu/miaoyou*). A possible implication of the association of the *Laozi* with one of the most important these of Neo-Confucianism is that Yulgok acknowledged the fact that Daoism and (Neo) Confucianism share the common truth paradoxically expressed, which is not against the principle of contradiction in the sense that the former part of the paradox refers to the ineffability or impossibility of the concept, while the

²⁵³ Zhu Xi, *Taijitushuo jie* 太極圖說解 (An interpretation of Zhou Dunyi’s explanation of the *Taiji* diagram); *SKQS* 710-21b.

²⁵⁴ Wing-tist Chan trans., 142nd article, Category 18 (*Great Ultimate (T’ai-chi)*), *Neo-Confucian Terms Explained* (The *Pei-hsi tzu-i*), p. 117:

As Wen Kung [Wen gong 文公, i.e., Zhu Xi] explained the sentence, ‘The operation of Heaven’ refers to principle, ‘having neither sound nor smell’ explains *wu-chi* [*wuji*], and ‘the pivot of all transformations and the basis of all varieties and categories of things’ explains *T’ai-chi* [*taiji*].
文公解此句, 所謂上天之載, 是以理言, 所謂無聲無臭, 是解無極二字, 所謂萬化之樞紐, 品彙之根柢, 是解太極二字。

²⁵⁵ Refer to footnote 216.

latter prefers to the significance or inevitability of the concept in our grasp of the universe. The two parts are not ‘materially’ concurrent but ‘conceptually’ concomitant.

In 3-[b], Yulgok, by applying the thought of the *Xici zhuan* A:10, draws the implication of the *Laozi* in the case of human beings. Although Yulgok does not use the terms, *de*, *xing*, and *xin* (the heart-mind) in 3-[b], such concepts are already presupposed because the operation of *Dao* “in the case of humans” (*jaeyin/zairen*) is *de* or *xing* according to Yulgok’s definition (*SE* Ch. 2); without assuming the concepts of nature and the heart-mind, Yulgok, a Neo-Confucian, cannot discuss human beings’ thought, action, tranquility, movement, sensation, and penetration:

Nature (*xing*) is that which is said of in terms of *li*, and emotion (*qing*) is none other than the place where [*xing* is] manifested and works, and heart-mind is that which presides over *xing* and *qing*. Hence, Master Cheng said, “There is an expression that points to the substance [of the heart-mind]; that is, ‘tranquility and no movement [of the heart-mind]’ There is an expression that points to the function [of the heart-mind]. That is “sensation and penetration [of the heart-mind].”

性以理言, 情乃發用處, 心即管攝性情者也. 故程子曰, “有指體而言者, ‘寂然不動’是也,”此言性也; “有指用而言者, ‘感而遂通’是也,”此言情也. (*ZY* 5:73)

Just as the doing of Heaven (*Dao*), *de* or *xing*, which is the core of the heart-mind, does not originally have deliberation for some designed and concrete behaviors; if it had such deliberation, it would be neither spontaneous nor intrinsic, and therefore could not be called the spontaneous disposition or innate nature. This is why Yulgok uses such concepts as no (deliberate) action, tranquility, and no movement. We are herein reminded of the metaphor of “mirror” again (*SE* Ch. 5); although a mirror is capable of reflecting external things, it does not intend to reflect them. When a mirror reflects things, it receives the images of things as fully as possible; likewise, if the original or ideal state of *de* or *xing* is well preserved, functioning without distortion, the heart-mind of a human being would feel things in the way they are. This is the meaning of ‘sensation and penetration’ in 3-[2]. What we need to remember here is that sensation and penetration are not just about objective recognition of the laws of nature, but also moral judgment. The successful moral judgment, behavior, and cultivation can be guaranteed

only when we cultivate our heart-mind in order not to obstruct the full efflorescence of the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *de* or *xing* (no thought, no action, tranquility, and no movement in the heart-mind). This is the reason why the “brooding (*lit.* steeping) and nurturance of the not-yet-manifested” (*mibal hamyang/weifa hanyang* 未發涵養), i.e., *xing* as well as the “observation and awareness of the already-manifested” (*yibal chalshik/yifa cashi* 已發察識), i.e., *qing* is significant in Zhu Xi’s learning. This relates to the Neo-Confucian methodology of self-cultivation, and the *Sun-Eon* also reflects it, as will be discussed presently.

One notable issue here (*SE* Ch. 3) is that Yulgok suggests his own understanding of the relationship between the *Laozi* and Neo-Confucianism by applying Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism skillfully to his reading of the *Laozi*, which could be regarded as bold. In fact, among the two Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi, and their students, there were some discussions about the affinity between the *Laozi* and the *Zhouyi*:

Laozi says “no-action,” and he also says, “No-action and yet nothing gets undone.” This should mean that he must take action, but such action is carried out with no-action. This is still a way of action. When the sages created the *Yi*, they never mentioned “no-action.” They just said, “[The prognostication of the *Zhouyi* should be by means of] no deliberation and no-action.” This warns against “deliberate action.” And it is subsequently followed by the words, “Not moving and still, [however, once] he feels, and then penetrates into the mechanism [i.e., the cause and effect] of the world,” [*Xici zhuan* A:10] which is the principle [penetrating] stillness and movement, and is not a biased teaching.

老子曰“無為,”又曰,“無為而無不為。”當有為而以無為為之,是乃有為為也。聖人作易,未嘗言無為,惟曰,“無思也,無為也,”此戒夫作為也;然下即曰,“寂然不動,感而遂通天下之故,”是動靜之理,未嘗為一偏之說矣。²⁵⁶

Zhu Xi’s students believe that the above remark was ambiguous enough in the sense that to watch out for general artificial actions could be understood as the purpose of *wuwei* in the *Laozi*; *wuwei* is not just literally “doing nothing” (*buwei*):

Question: In the *Ercheng yishu*, there is a passage, “The sages commented on the divination of the *Zhouyi* – ‘no thought and no action.’ This is to warn against all [deliberate] actions.” This passage seems certainly wrong.

²⁵⁶ “Er xiansheng yu wu,” *Henan chengshi yishu*, *juan* 5; *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 76.

Answer: I think that it should be read, “This is not to warn against all [deliberate] actions.”

問, “遺書中云, “聖人於易言‘無思無爲,’ 此戒夫作爲.” 此句須有錯. 曰, “疑當作‘此非戒夫作爲.’” (ZY 97:117)

However, Zhu Xi’s answer does not provide the student with a detailed explication on the problematic phrase of the two Chengs. On another occasion, Zhu again tries to defend the Cheng brothers’ remark:

If we talk about “warning against all actions” in contrast to Laozi’s “no-action,” it is neither Laozi’s no-action; nor has it that which is done deliberately. This is none other than the complete truth that Heavenly ordinance is prevalent, and thereby a kite flies [up in the sky] and a fish splashes up.’ It is never far from this [the meaning of] that when [human being] senses [external beings], [the hear-mind of human being] eventually [can] penetrate into the reasons for all the things in the world. However, since *ti* and *yong* are differentiated by themselves, we cannot but discern *ti* from *yong*. Nevertheless, we should be aware of the so-called ‘unity [of *ti* and *yong*].’

“戒夫作爲,” 比對老子之“無爲”而言, 即不為老子之無爲, 又非有所作爲, 此便是“天命流行, 鸞飛魚躍”之全體. “感而遂通天下之故”未嘗離此, 然體用自殊, 不可不辨. 但當識其所謂一源者耳.²⁵⁷

Zhu still fails to explain the obvious difference between *wewei* and warning against general artificial actions. Rather, he rephrases the two Chengs’ understanding of *li* as the principle underlying/encompassing both movement and stillness; the (physical) function (*yong*) as movement is discerned from the (metaphysical) substance (*ti*) as tranquility, but the former is rooted in and united with the latter. Ironically, for Yulgok Zhu’s explanation of Confucian metaphysics is none other than that of the *Laozi*; in so far as the *wuwei* of the *Laozi* can be understood to be ‘no artificiality, no deliberation, or no impositionality of *Dao*,’ the *Laozi*’s passage (*SE* Ch. 4) is comparable to the sentences of the *Xici zhuan*.

At this point, judging from Yulgok’s rational point of view on *li*, one may understand that *xing* does not have ethically assessable intention, action, and concrete principles, and yet it makes possible everything good and bad. This understanding does not contrast with the uncompromising Confucian faith in the innate good of human nature (*xingshan*); rather, it

²⁵⁷ *Zhuxi wenji*, juan 43; *Zhuxi ji*, volume 4, p. 2050.

means that the operation of *Dao* and *xing* realizes morality as balance and harmony although it is an unconscious and amoral operation. When we comply with our dispositions without immoderation and hypocrisy, our behavior can be moral to both self and others although our natural dispositions are just self-so and non-deliberate. However, Yulgok reveals inconsistency between his views on *li* and *xing*; he asserts that *xing* is just purely moral:

[Scholastic] learning is marked by everyday accumulation. Practicing Dao is marked by everyday diminishment. It diminishes and diminishes until it reaches the level of no (deliberate) action (*wuwei*).

爲學은 日益하고 爲道난 日損이니 損之又損하여 以至於無爲니라.

... Generally speaking, human nature is equipped with ten thousand kinds of good, [and so] no more good can be added. The only thing we have to do is to remove troubles [caused by] the physical endowment and desires for things. If we diminish and diminish [such things] until we cannot diminish them any longer, then we can resume (*bok/fu* 復) the original nature (*bonyeon ji seong/ benran zhi xing* 本然之性). ...蓋人性之中, 萬善自足, 善無加之理. 只當損去其氣稟物欲之累耳. 損之又損之, 以至於無可損, 則復其本然之性矣. (*SE* Ch. 6)

Rather than proposing an ambiguous or paradoxical thesis, Yulgok seems to go for practical simplicity; whether *xing* is ‘amoral and yet moral’ or ‘purely moral,’ *xing* can be regarded as morally good consequentially in any case. In other words, apart from the theoretical concern for the reality of *li* (*Dao*) and *xing* (*de*), when it comes to moral practice and cultivation, the resumption of morality needs to be raised as an urgent agenda. To do this, Yulgok again uses the concept of “originally-so-ness.” This is also shown in the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 7, “That human nature is ‘*originally*’ (*bon/ben* 本) good is [the meaning of] ‘what is stored in oneself.’” (人性本善是先已有所積) He interprets the last goal of practicing *Dao*, i.e., *wuwei* as the “resumption of the original nature” (*fixing* 復性). His association of *wuwei* with the original (*benran*) nature full of good suggests that he seeks to secure the ethical import of *xing* in the trans-ethical realm of *ziran*, for the realm of *wuwei* is none other than that of *ziran*. This also suggests that Yulgok may be confronted with the philosophical dilemma concerning the ethicality of *xing* as well as *li*. In fact, traces of Yulgok’s dilemma can be detected when he says:

Those that are good [in emotions] are things manifested by clear *qi*; those that are bad (evil) are things manifested by turbid *qi*. However, the root of all these is only the [same] Heavenly *li* ... Although [I say that] emotions that are not good originate from *li* [in the heart-mind] (= *xing*) too, [you need to know that] they are already those which are interrupted by contaminated and turbid *qi*, thereby losing the original state and becoming distorted, so as to be in excess or deficient. They harm humanity in spite of being [originally] rooted in humanity... Master Zhou Dunyi said, “The five natures feel and move, and good and evil are hereby differentiated”; Master Cheng said, “Good and evil are all [from] the Heavenly *li*”; Master Zhu Xi said, “The Heavenly *li* brings into being the human desire.”

善者, 清氣之發也; 惡者, 濁氣之發也。其本則只天理而已, ..., 情之不善者, 雖亦本乎理, 而既為污濁之氣所掩, 失其本體而橫生, 或過或不及, 本於仁而反害仁, ..., 周子曰, 五性感動而善惡分; 程子曰, 善惡皆天理; 朱子曰, 因天理而有人欲, 皆此意也。²⁵⁸

Although Yulgok describes the original state of *li* and *xing* as the absolute and pure goodness (*zhishan* 至善, *chunshan* 純善), he does not deny that even in case of bad emotions, *xing* as *li* functions as ‘that by which (*suoyi*) the turbid *qi* results in such bad emotions.’ Evil mind is harmful to humanity but originally based on the principle of humanity, and, as Yulgok emphasizes, the cause of evil should not be attributed to *qi* only. Evil mind should be the effect that is caused concurrently by (turbid) *qi* and *li*.²⁵⁹ This suggests that in terms of the genesis, the absolute and pure goodness of *li* and *xing* may not be far from *li* and *xing* as trans-ethicity. In fact, the philosophical predicament of the *xing* concept results from the ambiguity of Cheng-Zhu philosophy. A dialogue between Zhu Xi and his disciple highlights this ambiguity:

Question: Is the heart-mind of heaven and earth spiritual (*ling* 靈) [as that of human is] or doing nothing indifferently?

Answer: The heart-mind of heaven and earth cannot be said to be non spiritual; however, it does not think just as humans do. Master Cheng Yichuan said, “Heaven and earth do not have the heart-mind (*wuxin* 無心); nevertheless, they achieve the transformation [of the world], whereas the sages have the heart-mind (*youxin* 有心); nevertheless, they do nothing [deliberate].”

問, “天地之心亦靈否? 還只是漠然無為?” 曰, “天地之心不可道是不靈, 但不如人恁地思慮。伊川曰, ‘天地無心而成化, 聖人有心而無為。’” (ZY 1:16)

Zhu explains that the heart-mind of heaven and earth differs from the heart-mind of human as it is not the mental faculty, or rather, “no heart-mind” (*wuxin*); it is principle (*li*) itself

²⁵⁸ “Yinshim doshim doseol” 人心道心圖說, Seol 說, *CWYG*, *kwon* 1; *KTYJ* (III), p. 309.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

according to his explanation. (ZY 1:17). Quoting from Yichuan, Zhu posits that the state of ‘no (deliberate) action’ is the highest level which the moral Sages reach. ‘No deliberate action’ is perfectly possible only when one does not have the heart-mind (*wuxin*), i.e., one can be unified with heaven and earth or *li*. So long as the heart-mind originates from *li*, it is ironically possible to say that the heart-mind (*youxin*) contains the momentum of ‘no heart-mind,’ which is none other than *ziran* and *wuwei* of *li* (*Dao*). Accordingly, the Sages’ status of ‘no heart-mind’ is gained when the core of the heart-mind, i.e., the spontaneous and non-deliberate *li* is well preserved and realized rather than by eliminating the heart-mind. The state of no heart-mind or no thought connotes no moral intention, regardless of the ultimate moral effect that it may have; once there is an intention to be moral, it cannot be called ‘no heart-mind or no thought.’ Consequently, no heart-mind of heaven and earth (*li*) can reach the conclusion of amorality or trans-ethicality of *xing*. Although we do not know the words below are attributed to Yichuan or Mingdao, there is a record of words similar to those that have been discussed so far:

The Sages are none other than heaven and earth. Is there anything existing outside heaven and earth? How can heaven and earth ever have the heart-mind to discern good from evil? They contain, receive, cover, and support all things [good and evil]; however, they have a [proper] way of operating so. But if they are intimate with the good [only] but estranged from the not good (evil), so that they have many things not to be intimate with, how can they be heaven and earth?

聖人即天地也。天地中何物不有？天地豈嘗有心揀別善惡？一切涵容覆載，但處之有道爾；若善者親之，不善者遠之，則物不與者多矣，安得為天地？²⁶⁰

What Gaozi said, “The inborn is referred to by the word of nature (*xing*)” [Mencius 6A:3] is correct. Generally, what is brought about by heaven and earth should be called *xing*. It is appropriate that such things are all called *xing*. However, among those, there should be such distinctions as cow’s *xing*, horse’s *xing*, etc.

告子云「生之謂性」則可。凡天地所生之物，須是謂之性。皆謂之性則可，於中卻須分別牛之性、馬之性。²⁶¹

The above passages of the Cheng brothers mean that heaven and earth (*Dao* or *li*) is ‘trans-ethical and yet ultimately ethical.’ And Gaozi, the representative advocate of ‘nature is

²⁶⁰ “Er xiansheng yu” 2a, *Henan chengshi yishu*, juan 2a; *Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 17.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, p. 29.

neither good nor evil'²⁶² is positively re-appreciated by the Cheng brothers.²⁶³ Now it seems to be clear that the reconstructed Yulgok's dilemma is not just speculative but originates from the philosophy of the Cheng brothers. In fact, the understanding of *Dao (li)* and *xing* as trans-ethicity had been already proposed by later scholars after the Cheng brothers, while Zhu Xi also absorbed the Cheng brothers' philosophical insight into the *prima facie* paradox (amoral and yet moral), as discussed already; however, he scathingly criticized his contenders' unfolding of the idea of *Dao (li)* and *xing*'s trans-ethicity.²⁶⁴ Zhu's ambiguous attitude seems

²⁶² “Gongduzi said, ‘Gaozi says that nature (*xing*) is neither good nor bad (not good).’” (公都子曰, 告子曰, 性, 無善無不善也.) (*Mencius* 6A:6)

²⁶³ Given Gaozi's assertion that appetite for sex and food is nature (6A:4, “告子曰, 食色, 性也.”), Gaozi's concept of nature is different from that of Neo-Confucians, i.e. *xing* as the reification of the universal *li*; therefore, the Cheng brothers' re-appreciation of his theory does not seem to be parallel with the original meaning of him.

²⁶⁴ Zhu Xi's letter shows the situation concerning this problem at the time:

The [concept of] good in “the innate goodness of nature” does not contrast with the [concept of] evil [as the opposite pair of the usual good].” This is what Master Guishan 龜山 [i.e., Yang Shi] heard from a monk named Changzong 常摠. Euphemistically speaking, it does not seem to have a [serious] flaw. It is possible to say that the good of nature has never had evil as its equal match; however, it is impossible to say that the good of nature will not have the opposite match to the end. Nature is only one. What is already told, “Nature has nothing evil” means that there is no pair of good and evil within nature. This is, needless to say, what we are able to know. That by which good gains its name is because it is said in contrast to evil; the so-called ‘good of nature’ is that by which the Heavenly *li* is discerned from human desire. The Heavenly *li* and human desire cannot be simultaneously coexisting things; however, when we discuss from such contrasts as the first and next, fairness and selfishness, and right and wrong, there cannot but be the contrast [of good and evil]. Now you are sure to say that there is the absolute good separately, this is what I doubt fourthly.”

性善之善不與惡對。此本龜山所聞於浮屠者常摠。宛轉說來, 似亦無病, 然謂性之爲善未有惡之可對則可; 謂終無對則不可。蓋性一而已。既曰無有不善, 則此性之中無復有惡與爲對, 亦不待言而可知矣。若乃善之所以得名, 是乃對惡而言; 其曰性善, 是乃所以別天理於人欲也。天理人欲雖非同時并有之物, 然自其先後, 公私, 邪正之反而言之, 亦不得不爲對也。今必謂別有無對之善, 此又熹之所疑者四也。 (5th “Da Hu Guangzhong” 答胡廣仲, *Zhuwengong ji*, *juan* 42; *Zhuxi ji*, volume. 4, pp. 1954-1955)

In another letter, Zhu Xi holds that the interpretation of *xing* as trans-ethicity is nothing but the idea of such heterodox as Gaozi 告子, Yang Xiong 揚雄 (BC 53–AD 18, styled Ziyun 子雲), Buddhists, and Su Dongpo 東坡 (Su Shi 蘇軾, 1036–1101):

to have made later scholars more confused. The Yulgok school's controversy on human and animal nature attests to this situation to some extent.²⁶⁵ This paradoxical crux of Neo-Confucianism is proposed and appreciated again by the Yangming school in China in the same period of Yulgok and his successors. The significance of this paradox will be discussed later in conjunction with the Yangming school and Li Zhi's case.

Our discussion of the concept, *de* as *xing* seems to call for discussion on a further issue: how can we cultivate ourselves in order that the spontaneity of *de* as *xing* does not manifest itself as immoderation or immorality, but as moderation or morality? In other words, what and how should we do to achieve the natural state of 'doing nothing deliberate or impositional,' i.e., the resumption of *xing*? Although *Dao* (*li*) and *de* (*xing*) can be regarded as the ground of the universe and natural dispositions of individuals, deliberate or impositional cultivation and practice cannot be dismissed because *Dao* and *de* cannot be the conscious power or full

Generally, it is possible to say that the Heavenly mandate is not restricted by things; however, to think that it is not restricted by good is to be ignorant of that by which Heaven (*li*) is Heaven. It is possible to say that we cannot discuss nature by [including] evil; however, to think that good is not enough to discuss nature (*xing*) by is to be ignorant of that from which good comes. In the *Knowing words* (*zhiyan* 知言) by Hu Hong 胡宏 [1105-1161, styled as Wufeng 五峰], there are such discussions, and therefore, are many contradictions to the good points of the book. Such discussions are rather of no difference from the words of Gaozi, Yang Xiong, Buddhists, and Su Dongpo. What I could not but doubt before was just like this.

蓋謂天命爲不囿於物, 可也; 以爲不囿於善, 則不知天之所以爲天矣. 謂惡不可以言性, 可也; 以爲善不足以言性, 則不知善之所自來矣. <知言>中此等議論, 與其它好處, 自相矛盾者極多, 却與告子, 揚子, 釋氏, 蘇氏之言, 幾無以異. 昨來所以不免致疑者, 正爲如此. (3rd "Da Hu Guangzhong," *Zhuwengong ji*, *juan* 42; *Zhuxi ji*, volume. 4, p. 1950)

I am indebted to the Joseon King, Jeong's (*Jeongjo* 正祖, 1752-1800) selection and excerpts from Zhu Xi's numberless letters, *Eojae juseo baekseon* 御製朱書百選 (A hundred letters of Zhu Xi selected by the King Jeong, 1794), which was influenced by Toegye's selection, *Jujaseo jeolyo* 朱子書節要. A modern Korean translation is available: Juja sasang yeonkuhoe 朱子思想研究會 trans., *Juseo baekseon* (Seoul: Hye'an, 2000))

²⁶⁵ Refer to the previous chapter.

assurance that they master all humans and their heart-minds, thereby having them determined and driven by moral principle from beginning to end.

3. *Self-cultivation and the ideal of Confucian sage*

We have discussed that nature and the heart-mind are the ambivalent fields in Neo-Confucian philosophy due to the relationship with *li* (*Dao*), but they are given significance and an active role due to their ethical purpose. In this section, the methodology of moral cultivation that Yulgok tries to emphasize in his reading of the *Laozi* will be discussed. And it will be argued that Yulgok's understanding of the goal of such moral cultivation is none other than to become a Confucian sage, who is perfect in his self-cultivation and governing the people, and that the whole structure of the *Sun-Eon* is based on the *Great Learning*, which emphasizes the priority of self-cultivation and its unity with governing others.

3-1) *Framework of Self-cultivation – emptying or/and filling the heart-mind*

Yulgok holds that the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 4 (*Laozi* Ch. 11) and Ch. 5 (*Laozi* Chs. 12 and 10) provide us with an ethically practical and meaningful discussion regarding *Dao*, i.e., practicing or living up to *Dao*; Ch. 4 underscores the fact that *Dao* as (metaphysical) non-being is reified into the heart-mind as non-being in us, and that in order to maintain the optimal function of the heart-mind, one must maintain the emptiness of the heart-mind (*heoshim/xuxin* 虛心), namely, rising above selfish desires and humble reception of others' moral merit.²⁶⁶ On the other hand,

²⁶⁶ Refer to the earlier discussion of Ch.4 and the concluding remark as follows:

From this chapter (Ch. 4) on, the effect of practicing *Dao* is discussed. [The practice of *Dao*] takes emptying the heart-mind as a priority task. Generally, only after one empties the heart-mind, can one rise above the selfishness and receive others' good.

Ch. 5 summarizes the general framework of moral cultivation and its effect. First of all, Yulgok diagnoses the causes of immoderation by analyzing the *Laozi* from his Neo-Confucian perspective:

5-[1] *The five (various) colors can make our eyes blind; the five tones can make our ears deaf; the five flavors can make our palates spoiled, 5-[2] Driving a horse for hunting can drive people's heart-mind crazy, 5-[3] Scarce (precious) goods can make the [right] practice of people thwarted. 5-[4] Therefore the Sage goes for the belly and not for the eyes [for the scarce goods], and he removes the latter and prefers the former.*

五色이 令人目盲하며, 五音이 令人耳聾하며, 五味이 令人口爽하며, 馳騁田獵이 令人心發狂하며, 難得之貨이 令人行妨하니. 是以聖人은 爲腹不爲目이라, 故去彼取此이니라.

5-[1] “Being spoiled” means ‘losing [the ability].’ The five colors, tones, and flavors originally do not harm people, but nurture people. However, people quite often pursue their desires and do not uphold moderation. Consequently, those who indulge in color lose their right [sense of] sight; those who are indulged in tone lose their right [sense of] hearing; those who indulge in flavor lose their right [sense of] taste.

爽, 失也. 五色五音五味, 本以養人, 非所以害人, 而人多循欲, 而不知節. 故悅色者, 失其正見; 悅音者, 失其正聽; 悅味者, 失其正味也.

5-[2] Dong Sijing says, “This is [due to] *qi*, and it drives the heart-mind on the contrary [to being driven].” I think that people’s liking for hunting is a matter of volition (*ji/zhi* 志) [that comes from *qi*]. But if one drives a horse for hunting so as to go crazy, it is a situation in which one makes *qi* drive the heart-mind.

董氏曰, “是, 氣也, 而反動其心.” 愚按, 好獵者, 本是志也, 而及乎馳騁發狂, 則反使氣動心.

5-[3] Dong says, “‘Thwart’ means ‘hurt and harm [people].’ It means that the good conduct can be thwarted [by scarce goods].”

董氏曰, “妨 謂傷害也, 於善行, 有所妨也.”

5-[4] Dong says, “‘Removal’ means ‘discarding.’ The stomach takes in [food] but does not have [other] desire [than stuffing itself]. [On the other hand], the eyes see the outside, misleading the heart-mind.” Generally, the previous chapter (*SE* Ch. 4) discussed the marvelous function or utility of the vacuous center [of wheel, containers, etc.] Therefore, this is to warn that the heart-mind should not be stuffed with the outside vices.

董氏曰, “去, 除去也. 腹者, 有容於內, 而無欲; 目者, 逐見於外, 而誘內.” 蓋前章言虛中之妙用, 故此則戒其不可為外邪實也.

[As a result], one’s study improves and one’s conduct is completed, [so that both get] unified into one.

此章以後, 始言行道之功, 而以虛心為先務. 蓋必虛心然後, 可以捨己之私, 受人之善, 而學進行成一.

For Yulgok the issue is *qi* in the sense that the heart-mind of a human being consists of *qi* as well as *li*; the external stimulation, i.e., materials outside the heart-mind (*waiwu* 外物) is also *qi*. Problems (e.g., “losing the senses,” “going crazy,” etc.) occur when the *qi* of the heart-mind, i.e., volition (*ji/zhi*) is unable to maintain moderation in handling external stimulation. The similar analysis is shown in the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 20 again. However, it does not mean that the point of the *Laozi* Ch. 12 is asceticism, namely, denial of the value of physicality (*qi*); as already indicated, Yulgok clearly holds that the external beings originally do not harm but nurture people. The key to the problem is none other than the heart-mind; as far as one can maintain the emptiness of the heart-mind, one can maintain the optimal state, i.e., moderation. Nevertheless, the incessant process of input and output is inevitable in the heart-mind; accordingly, one might want to say that the emptiness of the heart-mind is practically impossible. At this point, the example of ‘belly or stomach’ is illuminating; the emptiness of the heart-mind is comparable to the stomach’s simple desire for fullness. The stomach does not discern expensive and cheap food, whereas the eyes and the heart-mind can go after luxury. The cultivation to get the heart-mind parallel to the natural and spontaneous state of stomach is described as follows:

5-[5] *Can you wipe out the profound mirror so as to have no dust on it?* 5-[6] *Can you love people and govern the country without doing anything [deliberate]?* 5-[7] *Can you act like a female in the opening and closing of the Heavenly gate?* 5-[8] *Can you possess knowledgeless knowledge by which to brilliantly penetrate all things thoroughly?* 5-[9] *[Heaven and earth] give birth to and bring up things, but they do not possess things; they do something but do not presume on it; they raise things but do not preside over things.* 滌除玄覽하야 能無疵乎아; 愛民治國애 能無爲乎아; 天門開闔애 能爲雌乎아; 明白四達 애 能無知乎아. 生之畜之하되, 生而不有하며, 爲而不恃하며, 長而不宰하니 是謂玄德이니라.

5-[5] “Wipe out” means ‘clean out greed for material.’ The profound mirror means reflecting and probing into the marvelous *li*. Generally, if we get rid of our desire for sound, color, smell, and taste, our heart-mind would be emptied, the objects of our perception would be clear [to us without distortion], and, [as a result,] our learning and knowledge could get more improved. When we reach the point where both knowledge and conduct are optimum, we would be flawless. 滌除者 淨洗物欲也. 玄覽者 照察妙理也. 蓋既去聲色臭味之慾, 則心虛境清, 而學識益進, 至於知行並至, 則無一點之疵矣.

5-[6] When the self-cultivation is already culminated, it can be extended to governing the people. However, people can be changed even if [the ruler] does nothing.
修己既至, 則推以治人, 而無爲而化矣。

5-[7] The opening and closing mean movement and stillness, [respectively]. The female means *yin* and stillness. This refers to the phrase, “[The sage] stabilizes (governs) [others and oneself] by the mean, correctness, humanity, and righteousness, and he focuses on stillness.”
開闔是動靜之意. 雌, 陰靜之意. 此所謂定之意中正仁義而主靜也。

5-[8] Dong says, “This means that she/he feels and responds in tranquility and marginalizes nothing.” This passage, I think, means that she/he knows and is able to do everything, but has never had a mind to do so, which is comparable to an expression from the *Shijing*, “[You are] unconsciously and unwittingly complying with the rule of the [Heavenly] emperor.”²⁶⁷ If she/he is so, then she/he can work concurrently with heaven and earth, partaking in the nurturance [of all creatures]. The following sentences extend and discuss this meaning.

董氏曰, “此寂感無邊方也。” 愚按, 此言於天下之事, 無所不知, 無所不能, 而未嘗不又能之心, 詩所謂不識不知, 順帝之則者也。夫如是, 則上下與天地同流參贊育, 而不自居。下文乃申言之。

5-[9] Heaven and earth give birth to [all] things, but they do not possess merits; although they interact to create and transform [all things], they do not presume on their strength; although they raise and nourish all things, they do not have a mind to preside [over all things] (*jujae ji shim/zhuzaì zhi xin* 主宰之心). The profound virtue (*hyeondeok/xuande* 玄德) of sages is the same as that of heaven and earth. Profound virtue is the virtue that is most sincere, deep, and subtle.

天地生物, 而不有其功, 運用造化, 而不恃其力, 長畜群生, 而無有主宰之心。聖人之玄德, 亦同於天地而已, 玄德至誠淵微之德也。

In the latter part of the chapter, Yulgok introduces the *Laozi* Ch. 10, associating the ideal state of the heart-mind with a “spotless profound mirror,” “female,” and “knowledge-less knowledge” (*muji/wuzhi* 無知).²⁶⁸ Yulgok understands the optimal state of the heart-mind as a spotless mirror to reflect *li* (*Dao*) (5-[5]); in contrast, the usual state of a mirror connotes the state where the mirror has so much dust on it as to obstruct the correct reception of data, and thus it does not reflect things as they are, nor can it fully use its illuminating function. When the

²⁶⁷ “*Huangyi* 皇矣,” sec.1 (‘Wenwang zhi shi 文王之什’), chap. 3 (‘Daya 大雅’), *Shijing*; James Legge trans., *The Shih, the Major Odes: The first decade (of king Wan): Odes 7*.

²⁶⁸ “Ignorance” is not a proper translation of *wuzhi* in two senses; first, *wuzhi* does not literally mean ‘no knowledge or stupidity’; second, if we draw on the etymological sense of ignorance, ‘non + gnosis (mystical or spiritual knowledge),’ then ignorance is the diametrically opposite meaning of *wuzhi* because the meaning of *wuzhi* is rather closer to gnosis.

dust on the mirror is removed and the emptiness of the mirror is restored, full and sound reflection is possible. In other words, when it is completely empty of contents, it can get to be full of contents without being overwhelmed by them. The spot or dust on the mirror is analogical to the excessive desires of the heart-mind. When the desires for materials are successfully dispensed with, the heart-mind can control over the desires for materials, thereby making positive use of materials without immoderation; the meaning of the emptiness of the heart-mind is for none other than the right filling of the heart-mind with external things. In the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 7, Yulgok says, “If a student [of *Dao*] practices such a way, she/he can broaden the heart-mind and be *full* of [the righteous] *qi*.” (學者久於其道, 則心廣氣充), which means that the heart-mind is supposed to be filled after being emptied and that *qi* is not always regarded as negative. The “knowledgeless knowledge” in 5-[8] is a paradoxical metaphor for such a state; the heart-mind in tranquility (*ji* 寂) does not have any discrimination or marginalization in understanding things, so as to have the full understanding of the world. The image of female, i.e., stillness (*jing* 靜) in 5-[7] also stands in with 5-[5]; stillness is the spotless and tranquil state of the heart-mind. This state of the heart-mind is not only pristine but also ideal; it is achieved through self-cultivation.

Yulgok considers such attainment from self-cultivation to be the stage where learning is improved and both knowledge and conduct are elegant and flawless. (5-[5]) Subsequently, in 5-[6], Yulgok discusses the effect of the cultivation of the heart-mind; when self-cultivation is completed, governing the people is also achieved without doing anything deliberately just as heaven and earth preside over all myriad things without a mind to do so. (5-[8] and [9])

As implied in the above, the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 5 contains two issues to be elaborated; first, the methodology for self-cultivation, i.e., how the emptiness of the heart-mind is attained; second, the effect of such self-cultivation, i.e., the social and cosmic meaning of

self-cultivation. These two issues inform the framework of the *Sun-Eon*, which ranges from the innermost cultivation to ideal rulership (5-[8]) and the unity with the universe. (5-[9])

3-2) *Propriety and Reverence for no action and spontaneity of xing*

The first issue is concerned with the following: 1) propriety (*li* 禮) as a way to educate forbearance and moderation; 2) reverence (*jing* 敬; deference) and cultivation based on stillness (*zhujing* 主靜) as a key attitude for self-cultivation; and 3) *xing* as the ultimate goal of practicing propriety and reverence, namely, the resumption of nature (*fixing*) or nurturing of nature (*yangxing* 養性). Perhaps the issue of propriety is against our usual understanding of the *Laozi* because the *Laozi* itself does not seem to promote the value of propriety. But in the *Sun-Eon*, the concepts of reverence and propriety are connected to the *wuwei* of the *Laozi* through the concept of *xing*. The *Sun-Eon* Chs. 6 and 7 (*Laozi* Chs. 48 and 59) deal with such issues. Ch. 6 reads as follows:

[Scholastic] learning is marked by everyday accumulation. Practicing Dao is marked by everyday diminishment. It diminishes and diminishes until it reaches the level of no (deliberate) action (*wuwei*).

爲學은 日益하고 爲道난 日損이니 損之又損하여 以至於無爲니라.

[Scholastic] learning is discussed in the light of knowledge, [whereas] *Dao* is discussed in the light of practice. Knowledge is extended by [reading] literatures, and therefore seeks daily accumulation. Practice is simplified by propriety, and therefore seeks to diminish [immoderation] everyday. [*Analects* 6:25]²⁶⁹ Generally, human nature is equipped with ten thousand kinds of good, [and so it is] the principle that no more good can be added [to it]. The only thing we have to do is to remove the burden of our physical endowment and desires for things. If we diminish and diminish [such things] until we cannot diminish them any longer, then we can resume (*bok/fu* 復; restore) the “**original nature**” (*bonyeon ji seong/benran zhi xing* 本然之性).

學以知言, 道以行言. 知是博之以文, 故欲其日益; 行是約之以禮, 故欲其日損. 蓋人性之中, 萬善自足, 善無加益之理. 只當損去其氣稟物欲之累耳. 損之又損之, 以至於無可損, 則復其本然之性矣. (*SE* Ch. 6)

²⁶⁹ *Lunyu jizhu* 6:25; Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book*, p. 30; D. C. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 85 (6:27). Lau’s translation is closer to Zhu Xi’s position that Yulgok subscribes to: “The Master said, ‘The gentleman is widely versed in culture but brought back to essentials by the rites ...’ (子曰, 君子博學於文, 約之以禮...)”

The logic of Yulgok is that *Dao* should be concerned with practice, rather than theory; if practicing *Dao* is for the improvement of conduct, the right way of behavior, i.e., propriety is inevitable, and it can diminish the immoderation that hinders *xing*'s ideal manifestation, and thereby reaches the full realization of nature eventually. To bridge the gap between Daoist naturalism and Confucian decorum and ritualism, based on the common linguistic image, Yulgok associates Laozi's "diminish" (*son/sun* 損) with Confucius' "simplification" (*yak/yue* 約; *lit.* bind, restrict, reduce, save, etc.). However, the problem is how to handle *wuwei* and *ziran* of *Dao* (*li*) and *de* (*xing*) which do not allow artificiality. Yulgok also admits that *xing* does not need any addition or reduction, but he tells that the reason for that is that *xing* is perfect and full of myriad kinds of good. The concept of *bonyeon/benran* is incorporated into the concepts of *wuwei* and *ziran*. For Yulgok the unhindered spontaneous state of human nature (*benran zhi xing*) should be read as the source of the ethical good, and it can be restored only by removing excessive desires originated from *qi*; in order to gain control of the *qi*-factor in human conduct, propriety is needed. One might say that Yulgok tries to justify artificial and extrinsic sanction in the name of natural and intrinsic freedom. The possible solution to this challenge is to introduce a concept to cover both the exterior and interior of human beings at the same time, suggesting that *prima facie* unnatural and external restriction and the natural disposition should be secured by such a bridging concept; Yulgok discusses such a concept in the *Laozi* Ch. 59 (*SE* Ch. 7):

7-[1] *In governing the people and serving Heaven, nothing can be better than “thrift” (saek/se 嗇). 7-[2] Generally, if you can be thrifty, you can come back early (jobok/zaofu 早復); if you come back early, you will accumulate your virtue repeatedly; 7-[3] if you accumulate virtue, you can overcome everything; if you can overcome everything, you will not see the limit [of virtue]; if you do not see the limit, you will be long lasting.*
 治人事天이 莫若嗇이니, 夫惟嗇이면 是謂早復이오, 早復이면 謂之重積德이니, 重積德이면 則無不克하고, 無不克이면 則莫知其極이니, 莫知其極이면 可以長久이니라.

7-[1] Dong Sijing says, “Thrift” is ‘to thriftily spare one’s essential spirit (*jingshen* 精神),’ and thereby means ‘storing and bracing it up.’ If a student [of *Dao*] practices such a way, then she/he can broaden her/his heart-mind and be full of [the righteous] *qi*, and thereby attain the perfect virtue of Heaven (*cheondeok ji jeon/tiande zhi quan*

天德之全).” I think that to serve Heaven is to govern oneself. Mencius said, “One serves Heaven by ‘preserving her/his heart-mind’ (jonshim/cunxin 存心) and ‘nurturing her/his xing’ (yangseong/yangxing 養性),” [Mencius 7A:1] which means that **governing self and others** has to be based on the way of thrift. Thrift means careful **‘restraint’** (*suryeom/shoulian* 收斂), [so to speak]; *self-governance* refers to such kind of thrifty [attitude] as stopping [biased] appetite and greed, nurturing one’s essential spirit, temperance in speech and eating, **reverent attitude** (*keo’kyeong/jujing* 居敬), and unpretending behaviors; *governing others* refers to serious enforcement of laws, simplification of ordinances, abridgement of complicated clauses, curtailment of unnecessary expenditure, **reverent service** (*kyeongshi/jingshi* 敬事), loving others, and the like.

董氏曰,“嗇乃嗇省精神,而有斂藏貞固之意。學者久於其道,則心廣氣充,而有以達乎天德之全矣。”愚按,事天是自治也。孟子曰,“存其心養其性,所以事天也,”言自治治人,皆當以嗇為道。嗇是愛惜收斂之意。以自治言則防嗜慾、養精神、慎言語、節飲食、居敬、行簡之流是嗇也;以治人言,則謹法度、簡號令、省繁過、去浮費、敬事、愛人之類是嗇也。

7-[2] Dong Sijing says, “‘Repeatedly’ means ‘again.’” Master Zhu said, “‘Early return (*zaofu* 早復)’ means that if one can practice thrift, one can come back [to the original state] before going too far. That one accumulates virtue means that one, by thrift, nurtures again what has been already accumulated [in self], and thereby adds [on the already accumulated].” [ZY 125:47] I think that human nature is originally good and it is what is already accumulated.

董氏曰,“重,再也。”朱子曰,“早復者,言能嗇,則不遠而復。重積德者,言先已有所積,復養以嗇,是又加積之也。”愚按,人性本善是先已有所積也。

7-[3] If one comes back before going too far, then one cannot but overcome her/his selfishness. If one can overcome the self, and thereby restores propriety (*li* 禮), then the world will turn to humanity (*ren* 仁).²⁷⁰ How can such virtue have a limit? When her/his virtue becomes limitless, she/he can reach the depth, width, loftiness, and brightness [in personality], which is the long-standing and boundless *Dao*.

不遠而復,則私無不克矣。克己復禮,則天下歸仁,其德豈有限量哉?德無限量,至於博厚高明,則是悠久無疆之道也。

The concept bridging the gap between propriety and human nature is “thrift” (*saek/se*), which connotes ‘prudence,’ ‘circumspection,’ ‘continence,’ etc., and it can be concretized in various individual behaviors and public policies. In other words, as Dong suggests, thrift is about the self-cultivation or endeavor to direct our psycho-physical attitude to the harmony and

²⁷⁰ *Lunyu* 12:1; D. C. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 112:

Yan Yuan asked about benevolence (humanity, *ren*). The Master said, “To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites through overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider benevolence to be his. However, the practice of benevolence depends on oneself alone, and not others...”

顏淵問仁。子曰,“克己復禮為仁。一日克己復禮,天下歸仁焉。為仁由己而由人乎!”...

moderation of *Dao*, i.e., the “perfect virtue of Heaven” (*cheondeok ji jeon/tiande zhi quan* 天德之全). Hence, thriftiness is the common quality of desirable behaviors ranging from self to others and Heaven; for Yulgok, compliance or deference to Heaven (= *Dao* = *li*) is achieved by the right governing of human beings (self and others) because human nature and the heart-mind are that which Heaven (*Dao*) is reified into. Therefore to preserve and nurture them is practically the most effective and viable way to serve Heaven, as Mencius explained. (7-[1])

According to the *Laozi*, “thrift” is identified with the endeavor to “early return to the original state” (*jobok/zaofu*) or followed by the “early return” as the effect of thrift. Yulgok interprets this course of thrift as the “restoring or nurturing of nature” (*fixing; yangxing*). (7-[2]) In fact, “*jobok/zaofu* 早復” in the *Sun-Eon* is a variation from “early submission” (*zaofu* 早服) in the *Laozi*. This change from “*fū* 服” (submission) to “*fū* 復” (restoration) comes from Dong Sijing’s *Jijie*,²⁷¹ which appears to originate from Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the *Laozi*. (ZY 59:71, 125:46, and 47) This change of character is justifiable in the sense that Zhu’s and Yulgok’s interpretation of *zaofu* as the return to the original nature is not totally alien to the notions of “returning to the root” (*guigen* 歸根) and “recovery of or returning to the [Heavenly] order” (*fuming* 復命) in the *Laozi* Ch. 16. The resumed original nature is expressed as non-selfishness (*wusi* 無私; *keji* 克己), decorum and ritualism (*li* 禮), and humanity (*ren*). (7-[3]) Put differently, in so far as thriftiness penetrates through decorum and ritualism, such formalities and restrictions are literally propriety as the natural expression of the original nature.

Of particular mention is Yulgok’s terms, “restraint” (*suryeong/shouliao* 收斂) and “reverence” (deference, *kyeong/jing* 敬) in 7-[1]; Yulgok defines ‘thriftiness’ as ‘restraint’ first and subsequently uses reverence in both regulating self and governing others. In fact, for

²⁷¹ *Jijie* Ch.59; ZD 12:852a.

Yulgok “restraint” is none other than “reverence.”²⁷² Accordingly, it is certain that Yulgok identifies “thriftiness” (*saek/se*) in the *Laozi* with “reverence” in Neo-Confucianism. This becomes clearer in the next chapter (*SE* Ch. 8), where Yulgok associates “embracing the One” (*poyil/baoyi* 抱一) with “concentrating on one thing” (*juyl/zhuyi* 主一). “Concentrating on one thing and no distraction” (*zhuyi wushi* 主一無適) is one of the definitions of “reverence.”²⁷³ Yulgok’s association of *saek/se* and *kyeong/jing* suggests that he thinks of Daoist method for “governing the people” (*chiyin/zhiren*) and “serving Heaven (*Dao*)” (*sacheon/shitian*) to be comparable to Neo-Confucian method for the “preservation of the heart-mind and nurturance of *xing*” (*cunxin yangxing*); both methods of self-cultivation aim at reaching the unity with Heaven (*Dao*). As a matter of fact, “reverence” in Neo-Confucianism is the very concept by which to justify and connect the inevitability of ritualism as the realm of *youwei* with the cherishing of *xing* as the realm of *wuwei* and *ziran*:

Propriety (*li*) is reverence (*jing*) in the heart-mind, and it is moderation (*jie* 節) [in various situations] and cultural refinement (*wen* 文) [in our behaviors and rites] patterned after the Heavenly principle. If the reverence of the heart-mind arises spontaneously, there is propriety. When expressed in responses to and dealing with things, [the expression] will naturally (*ziran*) have the classification and embellishment; if there is the classified [behaviors for various situations], there would be no deficiency (*buji* 不及). For instance, if one is too simple and lacks cultural refinement in doing a thing, then it would be a mistake and deficiency; if there are too many classifications and much embellishment, then it would degenerate into excess (*taiguo* 太過). The Heavenly principle’s moderation and refinement mean **the proper degree**; that is, what is correct according to principle. When there is no more excess or deficiency and the act is as it should be, there will be the **Mean** (*zhong* 中). That is why

²⁷² “Reverence is the beginning and end of sagely learning ... Now I select what can be the beginning of learning from [the items concerning] reverence, and put it before the chapter of Investigation for principle. I have named this chapter ‘**restraint**’ (*suryeong/shoulian*).” (聖學之始終也, ..., 今取敬之爲學之始者, 置于窮理之前, 目之以收斂.) (Suryeom jang 收斂章, Suki 修己 A, *SHJY* 2:3; *CWYG*, kwon 20:9b; *KTYJ* (V), pp. 29-30)

²⁷³ “Master Cheng said, ‘Seriousness (reverence) is **concentrating on one thing**, and oneness means not getting away from it.’ Wen Gong (Zhu Xi) combined the two and said, ‘Seriousness is concentrating on one thing without departing from it,’ making the meaning especially clear.” (程子謂主一之謂敬, 無適謂一. 文公合而言之, 曰主一無適之謂敬, 尤分曉.) Translation is adapted from Wing-tsit Chan, *Neo-Confucian Terms Explained*, p. 100. Cf. Zhu Xi, *Lunyu zhizhu* 1:5, “敬者, 主一無適之謂.”

Master Zhou Lianxi talked about humanity, righteousness, the Mean, and correctness in his [Explanation of] the diagram of the Great Ultimate and substituted the Mean for propriety. In doing so, he was particularly to the point.²⁷⁴

禮者心之敬, 而天理之節文也. 心中有箇敬, 油然而生, 便是禮. 見於應接, 便自然有箇節文. 節則無太過, 文則無不及. 若做事, 太質無文彩, 是失之不及. 末節繁文太盛, 是流於太過. 天理之節文, 乃其恰好處. 恰好處便是理合當. 如此, 更無太過, 更無不及. 當然而然, 便既是中. 故濂溪太極圖, 說仁義中正, 以中字, 代禮字, 尤見親切.

Consulting the above passage, we can think that the reason why Yulgok can dare to bridge the gap between the ideal of *wuwei* (and *ziran*) and Confucian propriety (ritualism) is that Neo-Confucianism admits that the heart-mind and nature originate from *Dao* (*wuwei* and *ziran*) which realizes harmony and balance, and that they can also realize the balance in behaviors and rituals (*zhong*, the “Mean”) like *Dao* insofar as they are correctly directed by reverent attitude. In this sense, reverence is the operation of *Dao* in human, and the Mean caused by the reverence of the heart-mind can be identified with *Dao*’s function, i.e., *wuwei* and *ziran*. Hence, Yulgok thinks that the genuine propriety for the Mean can be also thought to be non-deliberate action and spontaneity. In this way, Yulgok ties *youwei* and *wuwei* together.

In fact, Zhou Dunyi’s concept of the “Mean” is already used by Yulgok in the *Sun-Eon* Ch. 5, and the idea of “focusing on stillness” (*jujeong/zhujiang* 主靜) is also quoted as a necessary attitude in controlling *qi*. This suggests that stillness is concerned with the reverence of the heart-mind; accordingly, the relationship between stillness and reverence needs to be discussed. The *Sun-Eon* Ch. 20 (*Laozi* Chs. 26 and 23) and Ch. 21 (*Laozi* Ch. 45) discuss “stillness” repeatedly. Ch. 21 reads as follows:

Hasty movement can defeat cold, [but] stillness can calm down heat. [Therefore] clearness and stillness can be the correctitude of the world.

躁勝寒하고 靜則熱하니 淸靜이 能爲天下正이니라.

Dong Sijing says, “Movement belongs to *yang*; stillness belongs to *yin*. Accordingly, both hastiness and stillness’ winning over cold and heat cannot avoid being partial. Being both clear and still refers to the unity of movement and stillness and hereby the correctness of the world.” I think, being both clear and still is the state that is so placid as to have no temptation from outside and both movement and stillness are stabilized.

²⁷⁴ Translation is adapted from Wing-tist Chan, *ibid.*, p. 72.

董氏曰, “動屬陽, 靜屬陰. 故躁勝熱, 皆未免於一偏也. 清靜者, 動靜一致. 故為天下正.” 愚按, 清靜者, 泊然無外誘之累, 而動靜皆定者也.

Chapter 21, based on the previous chapter's discussion on hasty movement and stillness, discusses the correctness of clearness and stillness. [This is because] I am afraid that people might be partial to stillness.

右第二十一章, 因上章躁靜之義, 而言清靜之正, 恐人之偏於靜也.

Yulgok explains that “being both clear and still” in discussion is not just stillness as the opposite pair of movement. Thus, the stillness that he wants to highlight can be said to be metaphysical or absolute in that it is beyond physical or relative stillness and movement. In the *Laozi* Ch. 16, which is not quoted in the *Sun-Eon*, such stillness is discussed; it is understood as the “true correctitude of things” (*wu zhi zhenzheng* 物之真正) and the placid state after “returning to the root” (*guigen* 歸根) according to Wang Bi or the “root” (= *Dao*) according to Heshang gong.²⁷⁵

At this point, we need to be reminded of the metaphor of a mirror, which is compared to the heart-mind as the metaphysical non-being, i.e., *Dao* (*li*). In other words, the clear and still mirror connotes the ideal state of the heart-mind which is not disturbed by *qi*. This state of the heart-mind refers to *xing* as the not-yet-manifested (*weifa*) core of the heart-mind. The term of “*weifa*” is, however, not a reference to time order but logical priority or underlying fundamentality; *xing* exists both before and after emotions arise, just like the clearness and stillness of a mirror still exists as the underlying quality even after the surface is covered with dust or things are reflected on the surface. Accordingly, “focusing on stillness” (*zhujing* 主靜) means concentrating on the innate clearness and stillness of the heart-mind or *xing*. Such cultivation by “focusing on stillness” is nothing other than cultivation by “focusing on reverence” (*zhujing* 主敬). Both of them is for the “brooding and nurturing the not-yet-manifested” (*weifa hanyang*), i.e., *xing*; however, they cover the “observation and

²⁷⁵ The *Laozi* Ch.16, “致虛極, 守靜篤. 萬物並作, 吾以觀復. 夫物芸芸, 各復歸其根, 是謂復命, 歸根曰靜.”; *WBJJ*, pp. 35-36; *Zhangju*, Ch.16.

awareness of the already-manifested” (*yifa cashi*), i.e., *qing* as well because *xing* exists even after the arising of emotions. Likewise, Yulgok interprets the *Laozi* Ch. 45 as humans can be unified with *Dao* when through “thriftiness” (*se*), they cultivate their mirror-like inside, i.e., the heart-mind that has clear-stillness so that they can gain the unity and stability underlying both movement and stillness. The fundamental clear-stillness of the heart-mind is the key to unity with *Dao* (*wuwei* and *ziran*); therefore, it refers to *wuwei* and *ziran* of *de* (*xing*).

Here again, we can detect the paradox of *Dao* (*li*) and *de* (*xing*); the stillness beyond the relative movement and stillness is the congenial phraseology with the utmost good beyond good and bad (evil) and the true (metaphysical) non-being beyond the physical being and non-being – reminiscent of the problem of trans-ethicality of *Dao* as *wuwei* and *ziran* in the earlier discussion.

3-3) *Self-cultivation, Governing the people, and Confucian sage*

As discussed in the previous section, self-cultivation by thriftiness (*saek/se*) or reverence (*kyeong/jing*) aims at the unity with Heaven or *Dao* through the restored nature or *de*. In this sense, self-cultivation is about not only human beings but also cosmic affair. In other words, humans can be unified with Heaven and Earth (*Dao*), taking part in the cosmic process. Besides this metaphysical rendering, self-cultivation by thriftiness relates to “governing the people” because the *Laozi* says that cultivation by thriftiness is for governing the people and serving Heaven. Yulgok thinks that the *Laozi* Ch. 54 markedly provides a similar insight into governing the people as Confucianism:

26-[1] What is well built [from the ground] is not [easily] fallen down, and what is well packed is not [easily] unpacked. Hence, the ancestral ceremony by the descendants [of people who practice such things] is not stopped. **26-[2]-a** If the virtue (effect) of self-cultivation is true, 26-[2]-b then the virtue of family-cultivation would be surplus; the virtue of village-cultivation would be leadership; the virtue of country-cultivation would be abundance; the virtue of cultivation of the world would be universality.

善建者난不拔하며 善抱者난不脫이니 子孫祭祀이 不輟이니라. 修之身에 其德乃眞이면 修之家에 其德乃餘하고 修之鄉에 其德乃長하고 修之國에 其德乃豐하고 修之天下에 其德乃普이니라.

26-[2] Being “true” refers to being sincere and so not absurd. We cultivate ourselves by the truthful principle, extending the surplus [of energy] to governing others. Family, country, and the world are not exceptions. Wengong says, “All of these should comply with the root, thereby governing the branches, and we should reach out far from near.”

真者誠實無妄之謂也. 以真實之理. 修身, 推其餘, 以治人, 家國天下, 不外乎是而已. 濫公曰, “皆循本以治末, 由近以及遠也.”

“From Ch. 26, the Sun-Eon begins to discuss the way of governing others, which is rooted in and extended from self-cultivation.”

右第二十六章, 始言治人之道, 而推本於修身.

Of particular interest are **26-[2]-a** and **b** in that as seen in my translation based on Yulgok’s Korean postfixes attached to the text, his reading of the passage of the *Laozi* differs from the usual understanding.²⁷⁶ Yulgok divides **26-[2]** into two sections, **26-[2]-a** and **26-[2]-b** by using the subordinate conjunction, “*yi’myeon* 이면,” and the coordinate conjunction, “*ha’go* 하고,” thereby interpreting the passage as consisting of one antecedent and many consequents. The reason for the division is shown in both the commentary and the concluding remark of the chapter, “Governing the people should be based on self-cultivation.” This indicates that Yulgok understands the *Laozi* Ch. 54 as comparable to the *Great Learning*; his detailed understanding draws on the *Great Learning*, including the restructuring of the text.

Achieving both self-cultivation and governing others is the ideal that is practically impossible to reach. Nevertheless, it is continually suggested and encouraged by both Daoism and Confucianism. This link between self-cultivation and governing others originates from the belief that cultivated persons can have the mysterious power or virtue (*de*) to command spontaneous respect from people (*ziran*), thereby encouraging them to do so without

²⁷⁶ “If one cultivates such things in one’s self, virtue would be true; if one cultivates such things in a family, the virtue would be surplus; if one cultivates such things in a village, the virtue would be leadership; if one cultivates such things in a country, the virtue would be abundance; if one cultivates such things in the world, the virtue would be universality.”

compulsion (*wuwei*). Yulgok is aware of the *de* cultivation and, consequently, the ideal *wuwei* government:

Wordless teaching and the benefit of no [deliberate] action are rare in the world.
不言之教와 無爲之益은 天下希及之니라.

Sages do not speak; however, the *Dao* internalized in their persons is not hidden, and it is always shown to people, just as astronomical phenomena are gleamingly shown. This is called “Wordless teaching.” [Although] there is not [a deliberate] action taken, each thing commits itself to the other, and everything occupies its own place. This is called the benefit of no [deliberate] action.

聖人不言, 而體道無隱, 與天象昭然, 常以示人, 此謂不言之教也. 無所作爲, 物各付物, 而萬物各得其所, 此謂無爲之益也.

Yulgok elaborates on “Wordless teaching” and the “benefit of *wuwei*.” They are the natural edification and things’ auto-regulation brought into being by the *Dao* internalized in sages. According to Yulgok’s definition (*SE* Ch. 2), the internalized *Dao* in person is *de* and *xing*. As already discussed, *de* as *xing* has two aspects. First, it is ‘what is given everything by *Dao*.’ In the light of this definition, things’ auto-regulation (*ziran* and *wuwei*) is gained when they follow their natures (*xing* or *de*). Second, it is ‘what has to be achieved.’ Wordless teaching cannot be gained consciously (*ziran* and *wuwei*). One is naturally endowed with this special effect or power after the resumption or nurturance of *xing*.

Ivanhoe points out that in terms of the general structure, the relationship between *de* and *wuwei* is common to both Confucius and Laozi,²⁷⁷ and that the mysterious *wuwei* governance by the Confucian sage is based on *de* as “moral charisma” and the “power of ethical authority” that influences human beings only.²⁷⁸ Clearly, Yulgok imposes this Confucian view on the *Laozi*, which is emphasized particularly from Chs. 26 to 35. However, it would not be proper to view Yulgok’s comparison as exploiting the formal commonality to his far-fetched interpretation, for Yulgok bases the *wuwei* governance on the *wuwei* of *Dao* (*li*) and extends the range of governing the people to all myriad things, as seen in the above

²⁷⁷ Philip J. Ivanhoe, The concept of *de* (“Virtue”) in the *Laozi*, *ibid.*, p. 247.

²⁷⁸ Philip J. Ivanhoe, *ibid.*, pp. 240-242.

quotation. This interpretation by Yulgok may be suggestive of the complex characteristic of Neo-Confucian philosophy. So far as all things' natural dispositions (*xing-s*) are defined as originating from the same principle (*li*) as the commensurable core, Neo-Confucianism cannot easily shun a call to clarify its understanding of the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao* and *de*.²⁷⁹

What I can suggest at this point is that for Yulgok the *Laozi* has foci of learning, i.e., self-cultivation and governing the people, which are essential to Confucianism also, and that the former is given priority in the *Laozi*, while the latter is understood as the natural effect of the former, as is so in Confucianism. This viewpoint draws mainly on the general structure of the philosophy of the *Great Learning*. The encouragement of people and rulers' cultivation for harmonious and peaceful life and government calls for a role model to emulate because *Dao* does not have the personality to be practically emulated. The concretized image of *Dao* for the convenient understanding of people is none other than the "sage" (*soengyin/shengren* 聖人), which is carried through the *Sun-Eon*.²⁸⁰ The sage in the *Sun-Eon* is described as being unified with *Dao* (*SE* Chs. 5, 25, 27, 28, etc.), and yet he is originally one of us because he and we share the same principle (*Dao*) (*SE* Ch. 29); the difference is that he fully realizes *Dao* by cultivating his heart-mind. The *Sun-Eon* Ch.11 summarizes this point:

11-[1] *Although [a sage] does not go out of the door, he knows all about the world; although he does not peer through the window, he knows the Heavenly Dao.* **11-[2]** *The farther one goes, the less one knows.* **11-[3]** *Therefore a sage knows without going out, names [other things] without seeing [them], and achieves without doing anything.*

不出戶이라도 知天下하며 不窺牖이라도 見天道이니 其出이 彌遠이면 其知彌少 하나니 是以聖人은 不行而知하며 不見而名하며 不爲而成이니라.

11-[1] All myriad things are [already] in me. [*Mencius* 7A:4] Why do I have to wait for other things [than me] in order to search for [*Dao*]? If we get back our lost heart-mind, we can see *Dao*. [*Mencius* 6A:11] Master Cheng said, "[The teaching of

²⁷⁹ This problem leads to another topic of Chinese philosophy: the relationship between Daoist philosophy and the philosophy of the *Zhouyi* and the *Zongyong*, which are quite often used for Yulgok's interpretation of the *Laozi*. This has to be dealt with in another research.

²⁸⁰ Occasionally "Confucian gentleman (*junzi* 君子)," "Sages and the wise (*shengxian* 聖賢)," and such figures as Kongzi 孔子 and Yan Yuan 顏淵 are mentioned. (*SE* Ch.22; Ch.24; Ch.9)

the sages and wise want to make people] be naturally able to pursue [their learning] toward the higher level [from the lower level] and to penetrate the higher [truth] by studying daily matters”²⁸¹ – this is correct.

萬物皆備於我，豈待他求哉？求其放心，則可以見道矣。程子所謂‘自能尋向上去，下學而上達者，’是也。

11-[2] Wengong says, “If [they] lose the root, then [they would] follow the branches (derivative).” I think that the farther the heart-mind strays, the more difficult it is to know *Dao*.

溫公曰，“迷本逐末也。”愚按，心放而愈遠，則知道愈難矣。

11-[3] This tells us that sages have [the qualities of] clearness and brightness in their persons, thereby being clear about righteousness and principle. Accordingly, this refers to [the teaching of the *Zhongyong* that it is due to nature that] “enlightenment results from the sincerity [of Heaven] (*seong/cheng* 誠).”²⁸² Learners cannot be uplifted to this level at once. They should restrain their distracted mind and make sincere efforts in behavior.

此言聖人清明在躬，而義理昭徹，乃自誠而明之事也。學者不可遽跂於此，但當收斂放心，而勉其所行也。 (*SE* Ch.11)

However, as far as the definition of a sage includes such factors as the (mysterious) unity with Heaven and Earth (*Dao*), Wordless teaching that edifies both human and all other beings, etc., the boundary between a Confucian sage and a Daoist sage becomes pretty obscure. This ambiguous image of a sage seems to stand for Yulgok’s view on the sage in the *Sun-Eon*, which, I think, is not deviate from Neo-Confucian view on the sage.

²⁸¹ “Er xiansheng yu yi” 二先生語 一, *Henan chengshi yishu, juan 1: Ercheng ji*, volume 1, p. 5.

²⁸² “The enlightenment resulting from the sincerity [of Heaven] is nature (*xing*)” (自誠明，謂之性, *Zhongyong*, Ch. 21); “The sincerity is the Heavenly *Dao*” (誠者，天之道也, *ibid.*, Ch. 20). Wing-tsit Chan translates Ch. 21 as “It is due to our nature that enlightenment results from sincerity.” (*A Source Book*, p. 107.) His translation well captures the (Neo-Confucian) learning process discussed in the above despite the syntactical difference from the original text.

IV. Li Zhi: Disenchantment and Awakening

1. Li Zhi's suicide

Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602) was a sincere follower of Yangming learning and yet, after his death by suicide, he was denied and forgotten not only by Cheng-Zhu scholars but also by other Yangming scholars. Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695), one of the greatest Confucians in early Qing 清 dynasty and a follower of Yangming learning, did not even include Li Zhi's biography in his voluminous work, *Mingru xuean* 明儒學案 (The records of Ming scholars).²⁸³

Another great mind, Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682) commented on Li Zhi:

From ancient times till now, (morally) petty men never have scruples [about doing anything bad], but [among them] no one is worse than Li Zhi in daring to contradict the sages. Although we enforce the strict order from the emperor, the popularity of his books among people is still the same as before.

自古以來，小人之無忌憚，而敢於叛聖人者，莫甚於李贄。然雖奉嚴旨，而其書之行於人間自若也。²⁸⁴

Gu Yanwu's words reflect the fact that Li Zhi was identified as a heretic by the government and ruling class. Li's books were banned twice during the Ming (1602 before Li Zhi's death and 1625 after his death); nevertheless, many intellectuals still embraced Li's works. The order from Emperor Shenzong 神宗 (1563-1620), was "strict" indeed, which was a response to the impeachment by a censor, Zhang Wenda 張問達.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ However, due to Li's large social influence and relationship with other scholars, it is still possible to find the passages related to Li Zhi in the *Mingru xuean*. Eleven passages are found in the *Mingru xuean*. Refer to Xiamen daxue lishixi 廈門大學歷史系 ed., *Lizhi yanjiu cankao ziliao* 李贄研究參考資料 (Fujian: Remin daxue chubanshe, 1975), volume 1, pp. 79-82. For a selective English translation, refer to Julia Ching and Chaoying Fang edit., *The Records of Ming Scholars* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987)

²⁸⁴ Gu Yanwu, Li Zhi, *Rizhilu* 日知錄 *juan* 18; Xiamen daxue lishixi ed., *Lizhi yanjiu cankao ziliao*, volume 1, p. 84.

²⁸⁵ Zhang Wenda, "Like jishizhong zhang wenda shu" 禮科給事中張問達疏 (Impeachment by a royal inspector, Zhang Wenda), Wanli sanshi nian run eryue yimao 萬曆 30 年 閏 2 月 乙卯, *Shenzong Wanli shilu* 神宗 萬曆 實錄, *juan* 369.

Li Zhi dares to advocate delusive teaching, thereby deluding the world and deceiving people. Accordingly, I order the secret agency [i.e., Western Depot], the capital (Beijing) guards, and the commands from all (five) directions to arrest and bring him to trial. His books, whether they are already published or not, must be confiscated and burnt by the government offices in charge, and none may be kept and preserved. If his followers wrongfully keep them in secret, departments and offices in charge have to collaborate and bring them to trial.

李贄敢倡亂道, 惑世誣民, 便令廠衛五城嚴拿治罪。其書籍已刊未刊者令所在官司, 盡搜燒毀, 不許存留。如有徒黨曲庇私藏, 該科及各有司訪參奏來並治罪。²⁸⁶

As the decree instructed, Li Zhi was instantly arrested in Tongzhou 通州, a Beijing suburb. And after a month, on 25th-26th of the third month, 1602 in the lunar calendar, he ended his seventy five years of existence by committing suicide while waiting for the last order from the emperor.

Reportedly, Li Zhi stabbed himself in the neck with a shaving knife.²⁸⁷ A possible and popular way of understanding his suicide is to view it as a “protest” against the wrongful accusation and the authority²⁸⁸ or a kind of “martyrdom” for his faith.²⁸⁹ In fact, many records

²⁸⁶ *Ming shenzong wanly shilu* 明萬曆神宗實錄, *juan* 369; Gu Yanwu, Li Zhi, *Rizhilu*, *juan* 18; Xiamen daxue lishixi edit., *ibid.*, volume 1, pp. 84, 85-6.

²⁸⁷ Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道, Li Wenling zhuan 李溫陵傳, *Kexuezhai jinji wenchao* 珂雪齋近集文鈔; Shen Fu 沈鈇, Li Zhouwu zhuan 李卓吾傳; He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, Li Zhi zhuan 李贄傳; Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, Zhuowu xiansheng Li Zhi 卓吾先生李贄, *Liechao shi ji* 列朝詩集; Tan Qian 談遷, an article about Li Zhi's biography, *Guoquan* 國權, *juan* 79; Li Zhi zhuan 李贄傳, Mingwenyuan 明文苑, *Quanzhou fu zhi* 泉州府志, *juan* 54; Dao Guangzhong 道光重, Li Zhi zhuan 李贄傳, Ming wenyuan zhuan 明文苑傳, *Fujian tongzhi* 福建通志, *juan* 214. All are available in Xiamen daxue lishixi ed., *ibid.*, volume 1, p. 13, 22, 23, 24, 26, 35, and 36. Dao Guangzhong describes that Li Zhi used a letter opener.

However, the *Annals of the Ming* (*Ming shilu* 明實錄) has another account of Li Zhi's suicide:

Li Zhi was thereafter (after the decree) arrested. He was afraid of [being punished for] his guilt and starved to death.

已而贄逮至, 懼罪不食死. (*Ming shenzong wanly shilu*, *juan* 369; Gu Yanwu, Li Zhi, *Rizhilu*, *juan* 18; Xiamen daxue lishixi ed., *ibid.*, volume 1, pp. 84, 85-86.)

As far as I know, none of modern scholars has made use of this record in order to explain Li Zhi's death, except mentioning it as a defamatory description by the government. Moreover, in both the *Ananals of the Ming* and other records including Li Zhi's writings, there is no further collaborating information to assure us of the reliability of the above record.

²⁸⁸ For example, Qiu Hansheng 丘漢生, “Taizhou xuepai de jiechu shixiangjia Li Zhi” 泰州學派的傑出思想家李贄, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究, 1964. Vol.1: 115-133, Esp. p. 120.

describe Li as “indignantly cutting his throat,” thereby alluding to Li’s protest or martyrdom. However, according to the most substantial and authoritative record by Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道, Li Zhi kept his routine and composure before the suicide, writing poems; at least, for Li’s servant and such best intimates as Wang Benke 王本鉞 (?-?, the last disciple of Li Zhi, styled Dingfu 鼎甫), Li’s suicide was sudden.²⁹⁰ Li did not show any resentment before and after his attempted suicide:

Li always said, “Since I have completed the Ninth edition of the *Yiyin* (*Jiuzheng Yiyin* 九正易因), I might just as well die at any time soon.” After he completed the *Jiuzheng Yiyin*, the condition of his illness grew worse. When soldiers [sent by the court] arrived to arrest him, the residence was tumultuous. Li Zhi asked Ma Jinglun 馬經綸 about it. Ma replied, “The capital guards arrived.” Li Zhi painfully sprang to his feet and staggered along by a couple of steps, yelling, “This is all because of me. You bring a plank here for me!” Li lay down on the plank, crying out “Hurry up! I am a criminal. I must not stay here.” …Even after a lapse of time, the [last] decree [about how to deal with Li’s case] did not come down [from His Highness]. So Li Zhi composed poems and read books in the cell, staying easy. One day, he called his servant to get his hair shaved. When the servant was not around there, he grabbed the shaving knife and cut his neck. Nevertheless, he still drew his breath for two days. The servant asked, “Aren’t you hurt, Reverend?” “I am not,” Li wrote his answer on the servant’s palm by his finger. The servant asked again, “Why did you stab your neck?” Li wrote, “What can an aged man seek more in his seventies?” And he eventually passed away. 常曰, “我得[九正易因], 死快矣。” [易因]成, 病轉甚。至是逮者至, 邸舍忽忽, 公以問馬公。馬公曰, “衛士至。” 公力疾起, 行數步, 大聲曰, “是為我也。為我取門片來!” 遂卧其上, 疾呼曰, “速行! 我罪人也, 不宜留。” …久之旨不下, 公於獄舍中作詩讀書自如。

²⁸⁹ William Theodore de Bary, Li Chih: Arch-Individualist, *Learning for One’s self – Essays on the individual in Neo-Confucian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University press, 1991), pp. 232-233. de Bery associates Li’s “martyrdom” with both Buddhist and Confucian spirit. In a different context, Chai Shangshi 蔡尚思 describes Li Zhi’s death as “sacrificing his life for anti-Confucianism” (*weifankong er xishengshengming* 為反孔而犧牲生命). See his preface to *Fenshu/Xu Fenshu*, punctuated by Xia Jianqin 夏劍欽, (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1990).

²⁹⁰ The prosecutor tried to suggest the emperor to send Li Zhi back to his hometown, Quanzhou, Fujian. If the prosecutor had suggested it, it could have been ratified by the emperor. Thus, Li Zhi could survive the situation. (Sending back a convict to hometown without a specific question of law was common at the time.) Even if the emperor were to decree a death sentence, Li did not have to commit suicide because until the execution he could have prepared himself psychologically for the execution. Refer to Yuan Zhongdao, Li Wenling zhuan, *Kexuezhai jinji wenchao*; Appendix, *Fenshu/Xu fenshu*; Xiamen daxue lishixi edit., *ibid.* Vol.1, p. 13. And Lay Huang (Huang Renyou 黃仁宇), *1587, a year of no significance: the Ming dynasty in decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

一日,呼侍者薙發。侍者去,遂持刀自割其喉,氣不絕者兩日。侍者問,“和尚痛否?”以指書其手曰,“不痛。”又問曰,“和尚何自割?”書曰,“七十老翁何所求!”遂絕。²⁹¹

Judging from the above report, it seems unlikely that Li Zhi committed suicide out of protest and still less fear. Why, then, did he choose death? Li Zhi's last writings in fact often centered on the topic of death, which may provide clues to understanding not only his suicide but also his philosophical stance. I begin with Li Zhi's poems written during his detention:²⁹²

(A) *Not aware till illness* 老病始蘇
I have wandered all over famous mountains and canyons;
But never passed by this wall, nor did I enter this door.
Not until I fell sick did I know I had been jailed;
How many days and nights have I been through here?
名山大壑登臨遍,獨此垣中未入門/病間始知身在系,幾回白日幾黃昏!

(B) *A willow catkin floating in the air* 楊花飛絮
The four elements of my body will dissipate as quickly as horses run;
In which direction should I seek life and death?
A willow catkin flies about, getting in the eyes of this prisoner;
Now I realize this dark prison also has spring indeed.
四大分離像馬奔,求生求死向何門?楊花飛入囚人眼,始覺冥司亦有春。

(C) *The bright moon in the zenith* 中天朗月
Wanderers far away from their homes rely on inns;
This solitary soul far away is behind a locked door.
Raising my head, pleasantly look up to the blue sky above;
One great ray of nimbus illuminates and covers this cell.
萬里無家寄旅村,孤魂萬里鎖窮門/舉頭喜見青天上,一大圓光照覆盆。

(D) *Wish him would run through my books* 書幸細覽
[Even] Zeng Shen could be released or killed [by the king because of rumors];²⁹³
If His Highness could, however, pity me, how can I die?
I just wish His Highness could carefully read my writings;
His Highness can know my innocence and reverse the sentence then.

²⁹¹ Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道, “Li Wenling zhuan” 李溫陵傳, *Kexuezhai jinji wenchao* 珂雪齋近集文鈔; Appendix, *Fenshu/Xu fenshu*; Xiamen daxue lishixi ed., *ibid.*, volume 1, p. 13.

²⁹² “Xizhong bajue” 繫中八絕 (Eight poems in prison), Shihui 詩彙 (Collection of poems), *XFS*, *juan* 5, p. 116-117. Only seven poems are available.

²⁹³ This line is the application of an old fable, “Zeng Shen killed a person” (曾參殺人). (“昔者曾子処費, 費人有與曾子同名族者而殺人, 人告曾子母曰, ‘曾參殺人.’ 曾子之母曰, ‘吾子不殺人.’ 置自若。有頃焉, 人又曰, ‘曾參殺人.’ 其母尚置自若也。頃之, 一人又告之曰, ‘曾參殺人.’ 其母惧, 投杼逾牆而走。夫以曾參之賢, 與母之信也, 而三人疑之, 則慈母不能信也。今臣賢不及曾子, 而王之信臣又未若曾子之母也, 疑臣者不適三人, 臣恐王為臣之投杼也。” Qin 秦 2, *Zanguoce* 戰國策, *juan* 4.)

可生可殺曾參氏, 上若哀矜何敢死! 但愿將書細細觀, 必然反覆知其是。

(E) *Books could ruin men*

書能誤人

As has been and will be so, a slave of books is laughed at [by people];
Clueless about how to live in this world, just as a virgin is [about men].
Although everyone reads in this world,
Only the book slave is going to die because of reading books!
年年歲歲笑書奴, 生世無端同處女/ 世上何人不讀書, 書奴却以讀書死。

(F) *Regret for no achievement*

老恨無成

The window is full of glowing daybreak, but I am still in bed;
At pains to sleep and dream a dream to meet my intimate.
How can this lazy and distracted oldster achieve anything?
Reflecting on the past and reading books, I wait for the order from His Highness.
紅日滿窗猶未起, 紛紛睡夢為知己/ 自思懶散老何成, 照舊觀書候聖旨。

(G) *Ain't a gallant*

不是好漢

A man of pluck is not afraid of a miserable death;
A man of bravery is not afraid of losing his life.
If I don't die now, how can I again wait for my death?
Hopefully this soul is going to take the last journey soon.
志士不忘在溝壑, 勇士不忘喪其元/ 我今不死更何待, 愿早一命歸黃泉。

(A), (B), and (C) recount Li Zhi's life succinctly. Although he describes it as if he had toured many great sites only for leisure, his journeys traversing the continent were always made reluctantly and had not stopped until his end since he entered into public office in Henan 河南 province in 1555. The longest travel (1595-1600) was caused by a series of threats by the people and a provincial inspector, Shi Jingxian 史旌賢 in Macheng 麻城. After the longest travel, even fiercer ordeals befell him. Li Zhi's residential monastery since 1589, Zhifo yuan 芝佛院 was burnt down by a provincial high official, Feng Yingjing 馮應京 (in Longhu 龍湖, Macheng, 1600). Li had to flee to his last resting place, Tongzhou 通州 (a suburb of Beijing) after a short hiding in Mt. Huangnie 黃蘗 (1601). The next year, Li was arrested and faced with the situations described in (A), (B), and (C) (early spring, 1602).

(D) and (E) tell us about the cause of Li Zhi's imprisonment and his attitude toward the situation. Li was accused of disparaging Confucianism in his reading of Chinese history and promiscuous behaviors with prostitutes as well as women of scholar-official families,

etc.²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Li was still hopeful that the Emperor would clear him of all charges if he would read his works (E). His answer to the prosecutor also reflects the same attitude:

The prosecutor asked, “Why did you write those many delusive books?” Li Zhi replied, “Yes, this criminal has written many books indeed, and they are all in existence and beneficial to the sagely learning [i.e., Confucianism], not harmful at all.” 金吾曰, “若何以妄著書?” 公曰, “罪人著書甚多, 具在, 於聖教有益無損。”²⁹⁵

Since Li Zhi was confident of the contents of his works, he wished that the emperor would read and evaluate them without relying on others’ criticism. In this respect, Li Zhi cannot be regarded as doubting the emperor’s morality and authority. This is also shown in the last sentence of (F). Li Zhi’s scathing criticism of other Confucians, which had been published as the *Fenshu* 焚書 (Book to be burnt), no doubt provoked many scholars. Their resentment and reprisal were to be expected.²⁹⁶ Although it is still not clear whether or not Li’s conflict with Geng Dingxiang 耿定向 (1524-1596, styled *tiantai* 天臺)²⁹⁷ directly caused the

²⁹⁴ Zhang Wenda, *ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Yuan Zhongdao, *ibid.*; Appendix, *Fenshu/Xu fenshu*; Xiamen daxue lishixi edit., *ibid.*, volume. 1, p. 13.

²⁹⁶ “Da Jiao Yiyuan” 答焦漪園, Shuda, *FS*, *juan* 1, p. 7.

²⁹⁷ He was an influential scholar and high official and used to be a patron of Li. For Geng’s biography, refer to Julia Ching’s article, L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang ed., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976) Vol.1, pp. 718-21. Huang Zongxi describes Li Zhi’s conflict with Geng as follows:

“Because Li Zhi promoted the “Wild” Chan Buddhism (*kuangchan* 狂禪) and many scholars followed his lead, Geng frequently took what was practical as of chief importance. He made earnest exhortations to correct the evil and avert danger, but he in turn became muddled, half believing and half disbelieving the teachings of Buddha. In the end he could not prevail over Li Zhi. Li developed a hatred for Geng because of the imprisonment [and death] of He Xinyin 何心隱 (1517-1579) Geng was on close terms with Zhang Juzheng 張居正. Li Youzi 李幼滋, who advocated the killing of He Xinyin, was Geng’s associate in conducting public discussion [in the independent academies]. It certainly would not have been difficult for Geng to have saved He Xinyin at this time, but he did not soil his hands [on He’s behalf], lest he violate Zhang Juzheng’s prohibition against public discussion by doing so. Geng took “do not permit it to stop” (*burongyi* 不容已) as his basic principle, but in this case how could he stop trying [to save He Xinyin]?” (*Mingru xuean* 35:1a-b) (The translation is from Ronald Dimberg trans., Keng Ting-hsiang (Geng Dingxiang), Julia Ching and Chaoying Fang edit., *ibid.*, p. 192)

impeachment by Zhang Wenda, a student of Geng Dingxiang, it is plausible to think that Li's indignant letters to Geng and criticism of him must have embarrassed Geng and his people. Besides, Li's personality and attitude toward other Confucian colleagues might have provoked them:

His humor is narrow and hasty; his face is tinged with pride and arrogance; his words are coarse and mean; his mind is stupid and mad; his behavior is rash and imprudent. He is not fond of company but treats people around him in a friendly and warm manner [as if he means to be so]. In the company of others, he likes to find their faults and is not pleased by their excellence; when he does not like others, he cuts relations with them and tries to harm them to the end. His aim is taken at rich life (clothing, house, and food), but he regards himself as [such starved uncompromising patriots as] Baiyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊. His disposition is originally like that of the [shameless] person of the Qi, but he considers himself to be full of *Dao* and *de*, [assuming a virtuous air]. Obviously he gives others nothing in any case, but he offers an excuse for it by taking such an example as [a man of integrity,] Yi Yin 伊尹 in the Youxin 有莘. Obviously he would not pull out a hair [even if his pulled hair could save the world], but he says that Yang Zhu ruined humanity (*ren*). He acts contrary to the situations and his words conflict with his heart-mind. Since that is his personality, all villagers hate him. Once upon a time Zigong asked Confucius, "If all villagers hate a man, what can we think of him?" Confucius said, "It is not yet possible to judge him." So then, is it possible to judge this person now?

其性褊急, 其色矜高, 其詞鄙俗, 其心狂癡, 其行率易, 其交寡而面見親熱. 其與人也好求其過而不悅其所長, 其惡人也既絕其人又終身欲害其人. 志在溫飽, 而自謂伯夷、叔齊, 質本齊人, 而自謂飽道飫德. 分明一介不與, 而以有莘藉口, 分明毫毛不拔, 而謂楊朱賊仁. 動與物违; 口與心違. 其人如此鄉人皆惡之矣. 昔子貢問夫子曰, “鄉人皆惡之何如?” 子曰, “未可也,” 若居士其可乎?²⁹⁸

Even if the above description of Li Zhi by himself was rhetorical, it reflects an aspect of Li Zhi's social life; many people whom Li were on bad terms with or unconsciously ignored

²⁹⁸ “Zizan” 自贊 (A self-praise), Zashu 雜述 (Various writings), *FS*, *juan* 3, p. 130.

A partial English translation of Li Zhi's writings is available; William Theodore de Bary, Li Chih: Arch-Individualist, *Learning for One's self – Essays on the individual in Neo-Confucian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University press, 1991); Cheang Eng-chew, *Li Chih as a critic: a chapter of the Ming Intellectual history*, University of Washington, PhD thesis, 1973. And a full translation of the *Fenshu* is available in Korean; Kim Hye-Kyung 김혜경, *Bunseo* 분서 I, II (Seoul: Hankilsa, 2004), and a selective translation of the *Fenshu/Xu fenshu* in Korean was also consulted for this study; Hong Seung-Jik 홍승직, *Bunseo* (Seoul: Hongyik chulpansa, 1998) My translation may have many differences from these translations in many respects; however, I will not point them out in detail unless necessary for my arguments.

and humiliated could have taken revenge.²⁹⁹ Given the above description regarding his personality, Li must have been well aware of the feelings of others toward him. However, in the last part of the passage, Li counsels people to reserve judgment on him by quoting from the *Analects*. This indicates that Li is sure of his integrity as a Confucian, regardless of others' impression of him. Besides, as we can see in poem (G), Li Zhi thinks highly of the honorable death of Confucian gallants. Although most critics of Li Zhi have asserted that he rejected established Confucian norms and traditions, he never attempted to fundamentally deny Confucian values. However, the examples of Confucian worthies in the poem cannot be understood to mean that Li regards himself as good and the regime as evil and would protest against the latter by a heroic death. Rather, Li's viewpoint on death is greatly influenced by the Buddhism, i.e., that death is not diametrically opposed to life.³⁰⁰ In the Buddhist sense, life and death are not ontologically distinct but are no more than convenient classifiers referring to the continuous cosmic process of aggregation and separation of the four elements (*sida* 四大; the four components of "corporeality" (*se* 色; form; *rūpa*): earth, water, fire, and wind) as mentioned in (B). Hence, for Li Zhi his suicide may not be a professed heroic action but a spontaneous action as part of a cosmic process:

Life cannot but be followed by death like day cannot but be followed by night. Once we die, we can't be revived, which is just as what passes away can't be reversed. People have no occasion in which they don't want to live [more]. However, they can never make their life longer [than given]; people have no occasion in which they don't grieve about what has gone away. However, they can never stop [things' passing away] to let them stay. If we can't already make life longer, we'd better not want to live longer; if we can't already prevent things from passing away, we'd better not grieve about them. Thus, I straightforwardly say that we don't have to grieve at death; rather,

²⁹⁹ Li enumerates many people with whom he was inevitably in conflict. See "Gankai pingsheng" 感慨平生 (Deep emotion about my whole life), Yuyue 豫約 (Li Zhi's will and testament), Zashu, *FS*, juan 4, p. 187.

³⁰⁰ Refer to Li Zhi's words, "There is originally neither life nor death" (*yuanwu shengsi* 原無生死) in a reply letter to Zixin 自信 (?-?). ("Da Zixin" 答自信, Guanyin wen 觀音問, Zashu, *FS*, juan 4, p. 170.)

life is no less than what we can grieve about. Don't grieve about passing away, but I wish you to grieve about life!

生之必有死也, 猶晝之必有夜也。死之不可復生, 猶逝之不可復返也。人莫不欲生, 然卒不能使之久生; 人莫不傷逝, 然卒不能止之使勿逝。既不能使之久生, 則生可以不欲矣; 既不能使之勿逝, 則逝可以無傷矣。故吾直謂死不必傷, 唯有生乃可傷耳。勿傷逝願傷生也!³⁰¹

If one understands death, Li Zhi says, one would not grieve over it. This may suggest that by his suicide, Li Zhi might have wanted to cast away any sense of attachment to life. Li's idea in the above passage is indeed reminiscent of Chan (Zen) Buddhism and Daoism. Nevertheless, in so far as one is not frightened by such a phase in the cosmic process, his mental achievement can be considered to be parallel with Confucian gallants seen in (G). Elsewhere,³⁰² Li writes that the best death is that which one voluntarily dies for a great cause which certainly has a Confucian flavor. However, as seen below, Li regrets that he cannot have such a great death:

I am just an oldster now. Although I want to die the same way as the five examples (the five kinds of great deaths), I cannot make any of them. If it is already impossible for me to die greatly, but a heroic gallant [that I want to be] should not die in a normal way, what kind of death can I have? Given my situation, I can just make a small deal [about my death].³⁰³ It deserves to be called a big deal that which Gongsun Chujiu 公孫杵臼 and Nie Zheng 聶政 made; nevertheless, even they could not already see the right buyers (appreciator) of their deaths [at the moments of their deaths].³⁰⁴ If they did so, how can I [shamefully] die, lying on the bed although I have to die vainly? In order to search for the right buyer of my death here, I have already left my hometown and sent back my servants. Nevertheless, I do not have anyone to understand me here. Then how should I die without a person to understand me? I know I can't make a big deal. A heroic gallant should not have anything to vent his indignation on. If I can die without a person to understand me, I will die before people who can't understand me,

³⁰¹ "Shangshi" 傷逝 (Grief at passing away), Zashu, *FS*, *juan* 4, p. 164.

³⁰² "Wusi pian" 五死篇 (Five kinds of death), Zashu, *FS*, *juan* 4, p. 163.

³⁰³ This metaphor of "deal (buying and selling)" comes from the *Lunyu* 9:12 (D. C. Lau, *ibid.*, 9:13): "Zigong said, 'If there is a beautiful gem here, should we keep it in a chest and store it? Or should we seek a good price and sell it?' Confucius said, 'Should sell it, sell it! I am the one who waits for a good price to sell it.'" (子貢曰, "有美玉於斯, 韞匱而藏諸, 求善賈而沽諸?" 子曰, "沽之哉, 沽之哉! 我待賈者也。") "A good price" means the right appreciation of one's idea or vision.

³⁰⁴ Since they decided to die because of their already dead soul mates, they could neither die in the eyes of their soul mates nor be understood genuinely by others at the time.

registering my indignation. By this article, I would like to urge people, who appear to know me, not to touch my corpse when they hear of my death and come to see me. This is my solicitation!

第余老矣。欲如以前五者，又不可得矣。夫如此而死既已不可得，如彼而死又非英雄漢子之所為。然則將何以死乎？計唯有做些小買賣耳。大買賣如公孫杵臼聶政者，既不見買主來到，則豈可徒死而死於床褥之間乎？且我已離鄉井捐、童僕，直來求買主於此矣，此間既無知己。無知己又何死也？大買賣我知其做不成也。英雄漢子，無所洩怒。既無知己可死，吾將死於不知己者以洩怒也。謹書此以告諸貌稱相知者，聞死來視我，切勿收我屍！是囑。³⁰⁵

Obviously, Li Zhi thinks that his death cannot be a martyrdom which requires a great cause. Moreover, even if he had died exactly as instructed in the above (“*death venting his indignation on people who can’t understand him*”), Li would not have regarded his death as martyrdom or great death. If we try to collectively interpret the above words and his ‘peaceful’ suicide recorded by Yuan Zhongdao, presumably, Li’s suicide may be regarded as a sarcastic performance to indirectly vent his indignation on the worldly discernment between right and wrong and the unfair accusations leveled against him. In doing so, his suicide may have aimed to reveal a real person in pursuit of learning of *Dao*.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ “Wusi pian”五死篇 (Five kinds of death), Zashu, *FS*, *juan* 4, p. 164.

³⁰⁶ The following passage may be helpful for our understanding of Li Zhi’s idea about his fame and ill fame (accusation), both of which must have been very annoying to him:

People who are fond of me are not fond of me being an official or a monk, but they are fond of just me. People who want to kill me do not dare to kill an official or a monk; they want to kill just me. If I cannot be loved by others, then I am just not a person who is worth loving. That is all. What harm can those who love me have from it? If I cannot be killed, then I must be benefited from the grace of Heaven. Don’t they who want to kill me [vainly] labor! Thus my putting on a cap is not because I am afraid that people might kill me as a monk. Donglao 侗老 [i.e., Geng Dingxiang] has originally leadership, but he cannot avoid being biased. Most people under his care do not want Geng and me to get along with each other as before, and they spread groundless rumors in Wuchang 武昌 all day long. Although they originally wanted to defame me, they don’t know that it instead brings fame to me.

世人之愛我者，非愛我為官也，非愛我為和尚也，愛我也。世人之欲我殺者，非敢殺官也，非敢殺和尚也，殺我也。我無可愛，則我直為無可愛之人耳，彼愛我者可妨乎！我不可殺，則我自當受天不殺之佑，殺我者不亦勞乎！然則我之加冠，非慮人之殺和尚而冠之也。侗老原是長者，但未免偏聽。故一切飲食耿氏之門者，不欲侗老與我如初，猶朝夕在武昌倡為無根言語，本欲甚我之過，而不知反以彰我之名。（“Yu Yang Dingjian”與楊定見，Shuda 書答 (Letters), *FS*, *juan* 2, pp. 64-65.)

All this is but speculation, of course. But it may be suggested that Li Zhi's philosophical stance toward death is neither entirely Buddhist nor Confucian. This feature of Li's thought relates to the syncretism that prevailed in the Ming dynasty. This requires further discussion.

2. Li Zhi on the Three Teachings – The problem of Syncretism

2-1) *Buddhism and awakening to the fundamentals in learning*

Li Zhi describes his spiritual and academic journey as follows:

- I) I read books regarding the sages' teaching from my childhood; nevertheless, I could not understand the sages' teaching. Although I paid respect to Confucius, I did not know Confucius and why his teaching is respectable. This is like a dwarf watches a performance [in a crowd of normal people]; he just listens to others' talks and acclamations, following and imitating them. I was like a dog before my fiftieth year; when other dogs bark at images and shades, I followed them and barked. If people had asked me about the reason why I barked, I could have just ridiculed myself without being capable of answering.

余自幼讀聖教, 不知聖教; 尊孔子, 不知孔夫子, 何自可尊. 所謂矮子觀場, 隨人說研, 和聲而已. 是余五十以前真一犬也, 因前犬吠形, 亦隨而吠之. 若問以吠聲之故, 正好啞然自笑也已.

- II) After I was fifty years old, I declined in health and came close to death. Since my friends suggested me to read Buddhist scriptures, I browsed them and fortunately came to understand the origin of life and death slightly. Based on my understanding of Buddhism, I again studied the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* exhaustively and gained the core meanings [of the two books], which were compiled into the *Daogulu* 道古錄. After that, I followed a specialist on the *Zhouyi* and read it for three years. I made an effort day and night and published the *Yiyin* 易因 that elaborated on the meanings of the 64 hexagrams in the *Zhouyi*. Ah, now I know my Confucius and do not bark [vainly as a dog does]; I have grown up to be a tall guy from a midget. How can I depreciate the merits of my teachers and friends although my determination was strong (enough to achieve such a growth)?

五十以後, 大衰欲死, 因得友朋勸誨, 翻閱貝經, 幸於生死之原窺見斑点. 乃復研窮[学], [庸]要旨, 知其宗實, 集為[道古]一錄. 於是遂從治[易]者, 讀[易]三年, 竭晝夜力, 復有六十四卦[易因]鉅刻行世. 嗚呼! 余今日知吾夫子矣, 不吠聲矣; 向作矮子, 至老遂為長人矣. 雖余志氣可取, 然師友之功, 安可誣耶!

- III) Since I already regard myself as understanding sages, I want to share my understanding with Buddhist believers. What I want to push ahead is to extend my

friendly heart to Buddhist believers, letting them know the one everlasting *Dao* that cannot be two or split. [My idea is] indeed the same as what our emperor Taizu 太祖, *Gao huangdi* 高皇帝 showed in his publication, and I already contributed a detailed [writing about it (preface)] in an edition of the *Sanjiao pin* 三教品. Generally, if even Buddhist believers must appreciate [the one Dao], how much more must do so Yang Dingjian 楊定見 who is single-minded and passionate to learn Confucius! Let us push on together! If we have such a comrade as Dingjian, then Confucius would be shown in every direction; if our words are faithful and trustworthy and our deed is sincere and reverent, our practice of *Dao* will pay off even in barbarian areas. So then what kind of worry can we have in Chu 楚 province?

既自謂知聖, 故亦欲與釋子輩共之。蓋推向者友朋之心以及釋子, 使知其萬古一道, 無二無別。真有如我太祖高皇帝所刊示者, 已詳載於[三教品]刻中矣。夫釋子既不可不知, 況楊生定見專心致志, 以學夫子者耶! 幸相與勉之! 果有定見, 則參前倚衡, 皆見夫子; 忠信篤敬, 行乎蠻貊決矣, 而又何患於楚乎?³⁰⁷

In the first passage, Li Zhi speaks of his lack of understanding of the three teachings in the past. He also describes himself, “I had been so tenacious and recalcitrant from my childhood. I did not believe in [Confucian] learning, *Dao*, [Daoist] immortal, and Buddha. Hence, when I saw *Dao* practitioners, I detested them; when I saw [Buddhist] monks, I detested them; when I saw Confucian teachers (*Daoxue xiansheng* 道學先生), I detested them more.”³⁰⁸ Although the two records seem inconsistent, they can be understood as pointing at the same reality in that ignorance of something can lead to either a blind admiration of it or a violent attitude toward it.

Passage II) gives us valuable information on Li Zhi’s academic disposition. Li began to learn Buddhism when he had a serious health condition that made him aware of the fundamental problem, ‘life and death.’ Subsequently, Li Zhi confesses that when he was enlightened on the Buddhist truth, he was able to gain a fresh understanding of Confucianism. This may suggest that Li’s Confucianism was re-structured against the backdrop of Buddhism.

³⁰⁷ “Shengjiao xiaoyin” 聖教小引 (Preface to an anthology of the sagely teaching), Xuhui 序彙 (Collection of prefaces), *XFS*, *juan* 2, pp. 66-67.

³⁰⁸ “余自幼倔強難化, 不信學, 不信道, 不信仙釋。故見道人則惡, 見僧則惡, 見道學先生則尤惡。” (Li Zhi, “houyu” 後語 (Postscript), *Yangming xiansheng nianpu* 陽明先生年譜 (A chronology of Master Yangming) *juan* 2; *Beijing tushuguan zang zhenben* 北京圖書館藏珍本 *nianpu congkan* 年譜叢刊 (photocopied edition), volume 43, p. 331.)

However, as is shown below, Li's absorption of Buddhism was possible on the basis of Confucianism, too. And such circulation of philosophical understanding in Li Zhi already began even before his fiftieth year:

I could not but make use of a petty official's poor salary to support myself, so I could not avoid interacting with the mundane world. However, though I observed all my duties in my official capacity, I enjoyed myself in my private life. Unfortunately, when I was forty years old, I was tempted by Li Fengyang 李逢陽 and Xu Yongjian 徐用檢; they told me about the words of Master Wang Longxi 王龍谿 (溪) [i.e., Wang Ji 王畿, 1498-1583]³⁰⁹ and showed me the book of Master Wang Yangming. So I came to know that people who are enlightened on *Dao*, i.e., the true men *do not die*, and that they are, in fact, the same as the true Buddha and the true immortals [of Daoism]. Although I was tenacious, I could not help believing them.

惟不得不假升斗之祿以爲養, 不容不與世俗相接而已。然拜揖公堂之外, 固閉戶自若也。不辛年甫四十, 爲友人李逢陽、徐用檢所誘, 告我龍溪王先生語, 示我陽明先生書, 乃知得道真人不死, 實與真佛、真仙同, 雖倔強, 不得不信矣。³¹⁰

As Li Zhi says, his appreciation of the value of Buddhism and Daoism followed his encounter with the teaching of Wang Yangming (and Wang Ji), whose teaching was apparently generous to other teachings more than any other Neo-Confucians at the time. As seen in the above, Li Zhi neither claims any superiority of Confucianism nor condescends to embrace the other teachings, holding that the essence of the three teachings is nothing but insight into *Dao* and life and death; the highest achieved men in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism are not different from one another; they gain *Dao*, and thereby “do not die.” The above record is consistent with passage II); Li Zhi's spiritual and academic achievement owes initially to his friends mainly from the Yangming school although the credit ultimately belonged to Li Zhi himself.

Passage III) is tricky to understand because at the outset, Li seems to regard Buddhism as the genesis of his genuine learning; nevertheless, at the end, he says that he wants to share

³⁰⁹ Together with Wang Yangming, Wang Ji was admired by Li Zhi. Refer to “Longxi xiansheng wenlu chao xu” 龍谿先生文錄抄序 (Preface to an anthology of Master Wang Longxi's works), *Zashu, FS, juan 3*, p. 117, and “Longxi xiansheng gaowen” 王龍谿先生告文 (A sacrificial writing to the late Master Wang Longxi), *ibid.*, p. 120.

³¹⁰ Li Zhi, “houyu” (Postscript), *ibid.*; *nianpu congkan*, volume 43, pp. 331-332.

his knowledge with Buddhists. Is this just inconsistency? In fact, Li believes that Confucianism and Daoism fundamentally share the same truth on the fundamental issues as Buddhism, but many Buddhists do not know the fact, thus indicating their poor understanding of Buddhism. To this effect, even if Li said that he wanted to teach Confucianism to Buddhists, he would not regard it as inconsistent; Li would think that he still taught Buddhists the essence of Buddhism, albeit expressed in Confucian language. His appreciation of Buddhism at the beginning is nothing but his accidental experience; whether his awakening begins with Yangming learning or Buddhism does not really matter to him as far as they give him an insight into such fundamental issues as *Dao* and death and life. This is why Li suggests that Confucians too have to appreciate the “one *Dao*,” i.e., the unity of the three teachings. As he says, Li has elaborated on this idea in the preface to the *Sanjiao pin*:

Wenling³¹¹ Li Zhi says the sages of the three teachings are all exemplary (*dingtian lidi* 頂天立地),³¹² [and so mundane and trivial] discrimination and identification of them cannot be allowed. Therefore, it is said that there are no two *Dao* in the universe; the sages and wise have no two minds. [So] Our emperor Gao [i.e., Taizu] unified the universe, and thereby greatly founded the country.³¹³ He worshipped Confucius, Laozi, and Buddha as though he had worshipped one person. Accordingly, when the collection of the emperors’ writings discusses the sages of the three teachings, it quite often judges things through the two sentences [“There are no two *Dao* in the universe; the sages and wothies have no two minds”], thereby observing no difference between them.

溫陵李贊曰，三教聖人頂天立地，不容異同矣。故曰，天下無二道，聖賢無兩心，我高皇帝統一寰宇，大造區夏。其敬孔子，敬老子，敬釋迦佛，有若一人然。故其御制文集，凡論三教聖人，往往以此兩言斷之，以見其不異也。

Generally speaking, once *Dao* is discussed, then the heart-mind is concerned. Hence, how could there be [fundamental] differences among them? Even stupid men and women, and insects and plants cannot be outside *Dao* and the heart-mind. How much so for the sages of the three teachings! Generally, it is not [true] that people do not want to be separate [from all other things]. However separate they want to be, they cannot [be separate from all other things in the sense that all myriad things in the

³¹¹ This is one of his pseudonyms (号 *hao*). Many people used this name to refer to Li Zhi. Li liked to use many other pen names than his official name, 贊 *zhi*; for example, 溫陵居士 *Wenling jushi*, 卓吾居士 *Zhuowu jushi*, 宏父 *Hongfu*, etc.

³¹² This literally means that a heroic person puts his pate (mind) up in the sky and yet still stands down to earth. Thus, this stands for a great aspiration or indomitable heroric spirit.

³¹³ *quxia* 區夏; *huaxia* 華夏; China; Ming.

universe are equally under the control of *Dao* and the heart-mind]. It is also not [true] that people do not want to be distinct. However distinct they want to be, they cannot. 夫既謂之道謂之心矣, 則安有異哉, 則雖愚夫愚婦以及昆蟲草木, 不能出於此道此心之外也, 而況三教聖人哉. 蓋非不欲二, 雖欲二之而不得也. 非不欲兩, 雖欲兩之而不能也.

Now all chariots use [the same sized wheels] for the uniformed track; all documents are based on the uniformed character system; all social practices are in order. [Zhongyong Ch.28] In case of violation, normally punishment is meted out. [Similarly,] we should regard Emperor Gao as our teacher [i.e., standard]; his policies and teachings as rules so that we can watch whether [moral] dwarfs do obey every word of sages or not and whether they abandon the policy and teachings of the emperor or not. Do not denounce Laozi and Buddha; do not depreciate Daoist immortals and the enlightened. [To denounce and depreciate Daoism and Buddhism is] to copy and follow what comes from absurdity and impure words, which is also to blindly follow superficial opinions of the end of Song. [This kind of behavior can be regarded as] the present bidding defiance to the past, the lower betraying the above, and destroying the people.

今天下車[齊軌]、書大同、修行齊軌,³¹⁴ 有不遵者, 加以常刑. 以高皇帝為師, 以高皇帝之謨訓為律, 乃觀場矮子敢每聖言不遵, 弃(棄)謨訓不目. 非毀老佛, 輕詆仙釋. 唯勦襲胡元穢說, 雷同宋末膚見. 是生今反古, 居下倍上, 大戮之民也.

After a deferential reading of the collection of the emperors Gao and Wen, I excerpted from it, compiling into the *Sanjiao pin*. Oh, the sages had policies and teachings, which are lucid and settled. Similarly, this book [of the previous emperors] is [also] clear and earnest indeed. Being born in the present world and serving in the present court, people dare to look down upon the book; [people] compiled them into books, but do not care about them again; they put them on the desk, but do not read them again. I think that the fundamental order of the empire deserves reverence and should not be made satisfied [merely] with the punishment [of violators of the constitution].

故因敬讀高皇帝、文皇帝御制文集, 錄之以為三教品. 嗚呼, 聖有謨訓, 明徵定係, 是書明白切至如此. 生今之世, 為今之臣, 而敢以塵土視之, 束而不復觀, 置而不復讀. 吾恐國憲可畏, 不宜自甘於刑戮也與哉.³¹⁵

Li Zhi is sure that there is only one truth, i.e., the one *Dao*, around which the three teachings unfold themselves. In other words, the founders of the three teachings share the same spirit. For Li Zhi the three teachings are not fundamentally differentiated despite practical differences in detailed expression, as the emperor Taizu clarified. Then how and what kind of truth can they have in common? Li explains that all of them discuss “*Dao*” and the

³¹⁴ My emendation of the original text; in order to make sense, “齊軌 *qigu*” (the uniformed track) has to be put in the beginning part as shown above.

³¹⁵ “Sanjiao pin xu” 三教品序 (Preface to the *Sanjiao pin*), *Lishi congshu* 李氏叢書, *juan* 23 (Peking University archives), pp. 1a-4b; the same title, *Zashu* 雜述 4, *Liwenling ji* 李溫陵集, *juan* 10.

“heart-mind” (*xin*) as the fundamentals of their teachings; the ideals of the three teachings, i.e., Confucian sages or gentleman, Buddha (the enlightened), Daoist immortals are none other than people who penetrate *Dao* and the heart-mind. When one can penetrate these fundamental issues in learning, she/he will be able to transcend the problem of life and death. Further, based on the insight into *Dao* and the heart-mind, such ideal models are understood as being enlightened on the unity of all beings in the universe, thereby attaining the perfect harmony with all other beings.

Having this appreciation of the three teachings, Li Zhi warns against blind abhorrence of Daoism and Buddhism which results from an equally blind admiration for Song Neo-Confucianism, particularly the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucians’ anti-heretical (*fan yiduan* 反異端) consciousness which is based on the idea of the transmission of orthodox *Dao* (*Daotong lun* 道統論). Li Zhi thinks that to denounce and depreciate Buddhism and Daoism is to deny history and tradition; Buddhism had already become a part of Chinese cultural tradition even in the time of Li Zhi, not to mention Daoism. From this perspective, Li Zhi is more traditional than his contemporaries. Most of the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucians also draw on the notion of Chinese tradition, but they are rather sectarian in that they try to prereserve their cultural position and identity by marginalizing Buddhism and Daoism for the reason that Buddhism came from a foreign “barbarian” country and Daoism is nothing but an absurd daydream. This is what Li means by “to blindly follow superficial opinions of the end of Song.” The fundamental logic of anti-heresy in the Cheng-Zhu school is that *Dao* has been received only by a restricted number of scholars, i.e., the orthodox lineage of *Dao*. Li Zhi fundamentally disagrees with this sectarian idea:

Dao is present in [all] humans, just as water exists in the earth. Humans seek *Dao*, just as people dig into the earth for water. Indeed there is no occasion in which water does not exist in the earth and humans do not have *Dao* in them. Then is it possible to say that water does not flow [through the earth] or *Dao* is not transmitted [among humans]? When people dig into the earth for water, some give up digging a well and go off, whereas some endure difficulties (lit. dirty, turbid, salty, and bitter tastes) [, continuing

to dig the earth]. Among people [who continue to dig the earth] there are some who are unsuccessful and so eventually stop digging the earth, but there are indeed many people who find fine wells [because water exists in the earth]. Thus, it is really a big mistake to say that *Dao* has not been transmitted since Mencius died. Once one asserts this, then one asserts that the Song scholars could receive Mencius' transmission of *Dao* through the teachings of Zhou Dunyi, the two Cheng brothers, Zhang Zai, and Zhu Xi as one regards these scholars as "understanding words" (*zhiyan* 知言). Alas! Needless to calculate, it is more than a thousand and some hundred years from the Qin through the Han and Tang to the Song – There was the Jin and Five dynasties in the middle. [During this very long time,] if in the earth there had been no spring of water, humans would have died of thirst; if humans had not been able to get *Dao*, the *Dao* of humans (morality) would have been already extinct. Then how have human beings been able to produce many generations? – I haven't seen human being extinct, nor have heard I about [a total] chaotic society ever. Is it possible to say as if [the normal function of] the universe was reopened not until the Song came into being?

道之在人, 猶水之在地也。人之求道, 猶之掘地而求水也。然則水無不在地, 人無不載道也審矣。而謂水有不流, 道有不傳可乎? 顧掘地者, 或棄井而逃, 或自甘於溷濁鹹苦, 終身不見甘泉而遂止者有之, 然而得泉者亦已眾矣。彼謂軻之死不得其傳者, 真大謬也。惟此言出, 而後宋人直以濂洛關閩接孟氏之傳, 謂為知言云。吁! 自秦而漢而唐, 而後至於宋, 中間歷晉以及五代, 無慮千數百年。若謂地盡不泉, 則人皆渴死矣; 若謂人盡不得道, 則人道滅矣。何以能長世也, 終遂泯沒不見, 混沌無聞, 直待有宋而始開闢而後可也。³¹⁶

However, it should be pointed out that Li Zhi does not criticize Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism in general; in so far as it deals with the issues of *Dao* and the heart-mind, its essence is the same as that of Buddhism and Daoism. Once Li completely denies Neo-Confucianism, he contradicts his thought and belief – the unity of the three teachings. This is the reason why Li chooses the expression, “superficial opinions” rather than “all the opinions” of the end of Song; he wants to criticize only the corrupt practice and wrongful behaviors of individual Confucians rather than the whole of Confucianism and all its followers. In this sense, Li Zhi cannot be called an “anti-traditionalist” as an anti-Confucian,³¹⁷ contrary to our usual impression of Li:

³¹⁶ “Deye ruchen qianlun” 德業儒臣前論, Zhangshu 藏書, *juan* 32; *Lizhi wenji*, volume 2, p. 595. Cf. W.T. Bary, *ibid.*, p. 235.

³¹⁷ It was Cheang Eng-chew who first used this term for Li Zhi in English speaking academia. See his *Li Chih As A Critic: A Chapter of The Ming Intellectual History*, University of Washington, PhD thesis, 1973. However, in China, especially in 1970's, there were plenty of scholars who adopted the same kind of explanation and terms, for example, “anti-feudalism” (*fan-fengjian* 反封建) and “anti-Confucius” (*fan-kong* 反孔). As to this

... [Since the Han and Song,] people have become more mean and base and the ethos of society has been demoralized. No wonder that the abuses of the past still remain till today. In appearance, they are studying Confucian learning of *Dao* (*daoxue* 道學); at the bottom, they are pursuing wealth and ranks. Their clothing is the elegant Confucian garment, but their *behavior* is like that of a dog and pig.

In general, in the world there are many people who have achieved glory, wealth and ranks without lecturing on Confucian learning of *Dao*. Why should we discourse on *Dao* to gain wealth and ranks? The thing is none other than the fact that those who do not discourse on *Dao* but naturally achieve wealth and rank are men of [real] learning and talents, efforts and perseverance, and therefore it is impossible to not give them wealth and ranks; [on the other hand,] generally, only those who are not talented and learned, so as to be unable to achieve wealth and ranks in their life time unless they use the name of the sagely learning of *Dao*, are ashamed [of poverty and lowness]. This is the reason why they want to lecture on Confucian learning of *Dao* by all means and regard it as the source of wealth and ranks. Accordingly, now people who are with no talent, no learning, no action, and no skill but greedy for great wealth and ranks, definitely cannot but discourse on Confucian learning of *Dao* [in order to disguise themselves as the worthy who deserve wealth and ranks].

...人益鄙而風益下矣! 無怪其流弊至於今日, 陽為道學, 陰為富貴, 被服儒雅, 行若狗彘然也。夫世之不講道學而致榮華富貴者不少也, 何必講道學而後為富貴之資也? 此無他, 不待講道學而自富貴者, 其人蓋有學有才, 有為有守, 雖欲不與之富貴, 不可得也。夫唯無才無學, 若不以講聖人道學之名要之, 則終身貧且賤焉, 耻矣, 此所以必講道學以為取富貴之資也。然則今之無才無學, 無為無識, 而欲致大富貴者, 斷斷乎不可以不講道學矣。³¹⁸

The problem is would-be (Neo-) Confucian scholars, i.e., greedy but unqualified individuals rather than (Neo-) Confucianism *per se*. For Li Zhi their ‘behavior’ and ‘worldly intention’ are not acceptable; whatever ethics they discourse on, it is just for their worldly profits. Due to Li Zhi’s attention to behavior and intention as the criteria of moral judgment, he spares no mercy even to Yangming scholars in his criticism.³¹⁹

trend in Li Zhi studies, refer to the next section, 2-2) *Li Zi’s Confucianism as a Non-determinable Radicalism*. One of the most representative scholars in this trend is Chai Shangshi 蔡尚思. Until recently, Chai has maintained his explanation of Li Zhi as a strong anti-Confucian. See his “Wo yaowei zhongguo da shixiangjia Li Zhi huyuan – Li Zhi de pikong kancheng tianxia diyi” 我要為中國大思想家李贄呼冤 – 李贄的批孔堪稱天下第一, in Zhang Jianye 張建業 ed., *Li Zhi xueshu guoji yantaohui lunwenji* 李贄學術國際研討會論文集 (Beijing: Shoudu Shifan daxue, 1994): 1-4.

³¹⁸ “Sanjiao guiru shuo” 三教歸儒說 (Argument on reducing the three teachings into Confucianism), *XFS*, *juan* 2, p. 75.

³¹⁹ “Alas! In ordinary times when there isn’t a crisis, they know how to bow and salute one another, or else they sit the entire day in an upright posture [practicing quiet-sitting (*jingzuo* 靜坐)] like a clay image, thinking that if they can suppress all stray thoughts they

will become sages and worthies. The more cunning and insidious people join the meetings to discourse on the “innate knowledge” (*liangzhi* 良知), secretly hoping to gain some recognition and win high office. But when there is a crisis, they look at each other pale and speechless, try to shift the blame to one another, and save themselves on the pretext that “The clearest wisdom is self-preservation” [*mingzhe baoshen* 明哲保身]. Consequently, if the state employs only this type of scholar, when an emergency arises, it has no one of any use in the situation.” (Translation is adapted from W.T de Bary, *ibid.*, p. 223.)

嗟乎! 平居無事, 只解打恭作揖, 終日匡坐, 同於泥塑, 以為雜念不起, 便是真實大聖大賢人矣。其稍學姦詐者, 又攬入良知講席, 以陰博高官, 一旦有警, 則面面相覷, 絕無人色, 甚至互相推委, 以為能明哲 (“Yinji wangshi” 因記往事 (Discussing a historical example in relation to the previous article), Zhashu, *FS*, *juan* 4, p. 156.)

The biggest victim of his criticism was none other than the Yangming scholar, Geng Dingxiang whose teacher was one of the scholars that Li admired most, Wang Ji (Longxi). Li Zhi’s letter to Geng was a scathing criticism indeed, and thereby enough to ruin Geng’s reputation when it was published:

… Given your behaviors, you do not have a special [quality] different from others. All other people are not special and so am I, and you are not special, too … All daily activities are designed for yourself and your family only, not for others. But once you open your mouth, you say ‘You take care of yourself only, but I take care of others as well; you are self-centered, but I am altruistic; I pity the hunger of people in the east and also worry about people’s difficulty in warding off the bitter cold in the west; a certain person likes to visit and teach others – this is the will of Confucius and Mencius; a certain person does not like to meet others – that person belongs to the group of people who are self-centered and selfish; a certain person behaves not so prudentially but does good to others, whereas a certain person behaves prudentially but likes Buddhism, thereby doing harm to others.’ Judging from these [words and behaviors of you], what you have spoken of is not always what you have practiced, and your behaviors may not be what you have said [as good deed]. How different it is from the words of Confucius, “His words must reflect his actions [to be taken], and his actions must reflect his words [to have been spoken]” [*Zhongyong* 13:4] Is it alright to call your [hollow] words the teaching of sages? Thinking this over and over again, rather you are not better than petty men in the marketplace … However, judging from my observation of you, you do not have a good mind to transmit and cherish *Dao*. Who has succeeded to your way of learning, accepting and grasping it since you advocated it? I am not sure of other places, but in this village, Xinyi 新邑, who is the successor of your way of learning? People pretend to obey you in your presence, but they disobey you behind your back.

試觀公之行事, 殊無甚異于人者。人盡如此, 我亦如此, 公亦如此。…種種日用, 皆為自己身家計慮, 無一釐為人謀者。及乎開口談學, 便說爾為自己, 我為他人; 爾為自私, 我欲利他; 我憐東家之饑矣, 又思西家之寒難可忍也; 某等肯上門教人矣, 是孔孟之志也; 某等不肯會人, 是自私自利之徒也; 某行雖不謹, 而肯與人為善, 某等行雖端謹, 而好以佛法害人。以此而觀, 所講者未必公之所行, 所行者又公之所不講, 其與言顧行, 行顧言何異乎? 以是謂為孔聖之訓可乎? 翻思此等, 反不如市井小夫, …然吾觀公, 實未嘗有傳道之意, 實未嘗有重道之念。自公倡道以來, 誰是接公道柄者乎? 他處我不知, 新邑是誰繼公之真脉者乎? 面從而背違… (“Da Geng sikou” 答耿司寇 (Reply to Geng Dingxiang), Shuda, *FS*, *juan* 1, pp. 29-39.)

It seems clear that Li's attention to the fundamental issues in learning, i.e., life/death, *Dao*, and the heart-mind leads him to his "circular" understanding of the three teachings or (a religious) syncretism; whichever teaching one comes across, first, it will be acceptable so long as it provides profound insight into the fundamental issues, so that one can better understand the other teachings as well. And it needs to be clarified that his syncretism is not an eclectic compromise of the three teachings, but rather a sort of radicalism or fundamentalism for self-criticism or reflection as a sincere learner of *Dao*, who is expected to practice *Dao* out of practical rather than theoretical concern. This is well shown in Li's criticism of other Confucian scholars; to study Confucianism and proclaim oneself as a Confucian does not guarantee one's excellence in learning because the excellence and trustworthiness of one's learning should be based on one's behavior. How such common fundamentals as *Dao* and the heart-mind get connected with his practical concern in learning will be discussed in the following sections.

2-2) *Li Zhi's Confucianism as a Non-determinable Radicalism*

As discussed in the above, Li Zhi's syncretism originates from his awakening from blind admiration and abhorrence of the three teachings. A possible question to ask is how he identifies himself. If the three teachings have the same purport as he claims, could it be a problem to call him a Confucian or Buddhist or Daoist?

The above question appears elusive because Li Zhi clarifies his identity as a Confucian but also simultaneously takes up an ambiguous position to remind us of a Buddho-Daoist and, further, a Chinese legalist (*fajia* 法家)³²⁰ or utilitarian.³²¹ In fact, this question of Li's identity

³²⁰ The legalist aspect of Li Zhi was emphasized in 1970's, in which period, due to the hard driven political movement in China – Anti-Lin Biao 林彪 (1907-1971) and anti-Confucius (*pilin pikong* 批林批孔), the history of Chinese philosophy was regarded as consisting of the supposed struggle between Confucianism and Legalism (*rufa douzheng* 儒法鬭爭). Generally, Qing Si's two articles are regarded as the first instances of the re-evaluation of Li

as a scholar has been of concern to students of Li Zhi. Undoubtedly, Li Zhi was regarded as neither a monk nor a Confucian by pharisaic Confucians and Buddhists; he lectured on Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism to Confucians, monks, and even women with his hair shaved. Both higher monks and Confucian scholars of the time could not fully understand such idiosyncrasy. In response, Li counters with not only direct criticism but also humor:

All people regard Confucius as a great sage, and I regard him as a great sage, too; all people regard Laozi and Buddha as heretics, and I also regard them as heretics. But people don't really know what great sages and heretics are. This is because they get used to what they have heard from their parents and teachers [about sages and heretics]. Nor do their parents and teachers really know what great sages and heretics are; they are just used to what they heard from the scholars and elders. And the scholars and elders do not really know either, except [their conjecture that] Confucius said something relevant to these things; "Sagehood is not that which I [i.e., Confucius] am capable of" (*sheng ji wu bu'nen* 聖則吾不能, *Mencius* 2A: 2), which is interpreted as just an expression of modesty, [not denial of the 'fact' that he is a sage], and "focusing on the extremes" (*gonghu yiduan* 攻乎異端, *Analects* 2:16) is interpreted as referring to [digging into] Laozi and Buddha. The scholars and elders had made a conjecture and asserted these things; parents and teachers repeated and

Zhi as a Chinese legalist; Qing Si 慶思 (pseudonym), Li Zhi fanlixue panshengdao de douzheng 李贄反理學叛聖道的鬭爭, *Guangming ribao* 光明日報 (13 Nov, 1973); reprinted in *Zhongguo lidai fankong he zunkong douzheng* 中國歷代反孔尊孔鬭爭 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1974), pp. 190-198, and his Zunfa fanrude jinbu sixiangjia Li Zhi 尊法反儒的進步思想家李贄, *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 (13 Jun, 1974); reprinted in *Lun fajia* 論法家 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1974) pp. 70-81.

For this trend in 1970's China, refer to Mori Noriko 森紀子, Chūgoku ni okeru ri takugo zō no henzen 中国における李卓吾像の変遷, *Toyoshi kenkyu* 東洋史研究, 1974, 33.4:124-32; Shin Yong-chul 신용철, Junggong-ae iteoseo lij sang-ui jeongchi-jeok suyong 中共에 있어서 李贄像의 政治的 收容, *Kyeonghi sahak* 慶熙史學, 1982, 9&10:199-216 and *Yi Tak-Oh* 이탁오 (Seoul: Jishik san'upsa, 2006), pp. 363-414; Yu Dong-Hwan 劉東桓, *Yi ji-ui cheonli yinyok ron yeonku* 李贄의 天理人欲論研究, Korea University PhD dissertation, 2000, pp. 10-13. Mori tries to consider an interpretive possibility of Li Zhi as both a Yangming scholar and legalist, suggesting that 'Li Zhi as a sheer legalistic scholar' is not plausible. On the other hand, Yu points out that the emphasis on Li Zhi as a legalist was apparent until 1975 and that since 1976, the evaluation of Li has become more various than before. For a comprehensive survey on publications during this period, refer to Chan Hok-lam, *Li Chih 1507-1602 in Contemporary Chinese Historiography* (White Plains, New York: 1980), pp. 195-207.

³²¹ This aspect of Li Zhi relates to the so-called legalistic characteristic of him. Chinese legalism is usually regarded as marked with the focus on efficacy and utility in governance. Thus, Li's emphasis on efficacy and utility in learning and praise of practical thinkers, successful rulers, and politicians – for example, Xunzi 荀子, Shang Yang 商鞅, the merciless first emperor, Qin shi huangdi 秦始皇帝, and the like – can be regarded as relating to Chinese legalism.

recited them, and children have blindly listened to them. All words from ten thousand mouths are the same, so that I cannot overrule the words. This has been the way in which the same words have been transmitted and repeated for thousands of years; nevertheless, people do not know it by themselves. However they do not hold, “We just vainly cram in the words,” but hold, “We know the [great] figures [who said such true words],” and do not hold, “We are forced to say ‘we know’ about what we do not really know,” but hold, “We say ‘we know’ only about what we already know.” So [I dare say] in the present people do not use their eyes (thinking faculty) [to judge their status] although they have eyes. What kind of person am I then? Can I dare to say I use my thinking faculty? I follow people, thereby regarding him as a sage and paying homage to him. Accordingly, I follow the way people do, thereby setting [the image of] Confucius on a pedestal at the Buddhist monastery, Zhifo yuan.

人皆以孔子爲大聖，吾亦以爲大聖；皆以老、佛爲異端，吾亦以爲異端。人人非真知大聖與異端也，以所聞於父師之教者熟也；父師非真知大聖與異端也，以所聞於儒先之教者熟也；儒先亦非真知大聖與異端也，以孔子有是言也。其曰“聖則吾不能，”是居謙也。其曰，“攻乎異端，”是必爲老與佛也。儒先億度而言之，父師沿襲而誦之，小子聾而聽之。萬口一詞，不可破也；千年一律，不自知也。不曰“徒誦其言，”而曰“已知其人”；不曰，“強不知以爲知，”而曰“知之謂知之。”至今日，雖有目，無所用矣。余何人也，敢謂有目？亦從衆耳。既從衆而聖之，亦從衆而事之，是故吾從衆事孔子於芝佛之院。³²²

Li Zhi points out that people do not really know why the Confucian sages are great and the so-called heretic teachings are harmful. This may be the nature of ‘ideology’ as a false consciousness, the main function of which consists not in transmission of the truth but in providing an easier excuse to control society and people. The more people believe in it, the easier rulers control society. However, so long as Buddhism is not legally banned,³²³ although

³²² “Ti Kongzi xiang yu zhifoyuan” 題孔子像於芝佛院 (Hanging up the image of Confucius in the Zhifo yuan), Zashu, *XFS*, *juan* 4, p. 100; Translation is partly adapted from de Bary’s abridged translation. (*Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.)

³²³ “Although the country recruits talented people by examining their understanding of the Six Confucian scriptures, it also collects [and publishes] every kind of Buddhist scriptures; the country educates people by the Six Confucian scriptures, but it establishes the control system for Buddhist religion, which means that becoming a Buddhist monk has never been prohibited.” (國家以六經取士，而有三藏之收。以六藝教人，而又有戒壇之設，則亦未嘗以出家爲禁矣。)(“Fu Deng Shiyang” 復鄧石陽, Shuda, *FS*, *juan* 1, p. 12)

This may be the reason why Li Zhi thinks much of the emperor Tai’s viewpoint on the three teachings, which had been the guiding doctrine of policy for religion throughout the whole Ming. As Langlois and Sun point out, for a stabilized political power, the founders of dynasties could never ignore various religious powers, and Taizu was one of the best examples of it; as a matter of fact, he had explored various religions covering shamanism to Manichaeism, and, needless to say, the three teachings. For a general introduction of Taizu’s syncretism, refer to John D. Langlois, Jr and Sun K’o-K’uan., Three Teachings Syncretism and The Thought of Ming T’ai-tsu, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* Vol. 43, No. 1. (Jun.,

Li Zhi shaves his hair, they cannot prevent Li Zhi from paying homage to Confucius by hanging the image of Confucius in a Buddhist temple, which can be ironically a mockery of the attachment to the notion of orthodoxy and heresy. Li's action cannot but be regarded as a humorous and satiric performance; nevertheless, other Confucians could not retaliate against Li's action.³²⁴ In his use of another humorous satire, Li tries to satirize institutionalized Confucianism and Confucians, who cram in the scriptures of Confucianism and rely on the prevailing ideology, i.e., the claim of Confucianism as orthodoxy without knowing the essence of Confucianism:

A would-be Confucian scholar wore high and large wooden clogs and a long robe together with a wide belt. Besides, he put on a cap embroidered with moral principles and holds a gauge stick of morality, picking up a sheet of paper and writing characters, blah and blah again. Third blah and fourth blah spontaneously came out of his lips, professing himself to be a genuine follower of Confucius. One day he happened to meet Liu Xie 劉諧. Liu Xie was a man of wisdom, and when Liu saw the would-be scholar, he chuckled and said, "This man does not know my brother, Zhongni 仲尼 [i.e., Confucius] yet." The scholar abruptly hardened his face and stood up, saying, "If Heaven had not produced Confucius, the whole world and history could have been like a dark night. What kind of person are you? How dare you call Confucius your brother?" Liu Xie replied, "Then it must have been true that such ancient sages as Fuxi 伏羲 had to light up a lamp all day long to walk around [because there was no Confucius at the time]." The scholar shut up and stopped talking. How could he understand the deep meaning of Liu's words? I heard this story and said, "Liu's words are simple and yet proper; precise and yet full of suggestion, so that they can tear off tangling doubt and enable us to see the clear sky [i.e., truth] again. His words being so brilliant, his person can be easily imagined. Although his words came from kidding, the significant meaning will not change over time."

1983): 97-139. And I translate Taizu's official announcement on the three teachings. See Appendix II.

³²⁴ This is indicated in Li's letter; insofar as he was regarded as a monk, people could not but hesitate to harm him, which must have originated from the culture at the time:

I am nothing but a heretic, and thereby not enough to live up to the Way indeed. From Master Zhu Xi's time till today, Daoism and Buddhism have been regarded as heresies, and they have been continuously rejected for hundreds years. I am not unaware of the situation; nevertheless, I have offended many people [by becoming a monk]. That is because I could not but do it; I was afraid of being killed.

弟異端者流也，本無足道者也。自朱夫子以至今日，以老佛為異端，相襲而排擯之者，不知其幾百年矣。弟非不知而敢以直犯眾怒者，不得已也。老而怕死也。（“Fu Deng Shiyang,” *ibid.*）

有一道學，高屐大履，長袖闊帶，網常之冠，人倫之表，拾紙墨之一二，竊唇脣之三四，自謂真仲尼之徒焉。時遇劉諧。劉諧者，聰明士，見而哂曰，“是未知我仲尼兄也。”其人勃然作色而起曰，“天不生仲尼，萬古如長夜。子，何人者，敢呼仲尼而兄之？”劉諧曰，“怪得羲皇以上聖人盡日燃紙燭而行也！”其人嘿然自止。然安知其言之至哉！李生聞而善曰，“斯言也，簡而當，約而有餘，可以破疑網而昭中天矣。其言如此，其人可知也。蓋雖出於一時調卑之語，然其至者百世不能易。”³²⁵

Nevertheless, Li's purpose was to seek a universal reason for learning rather than deny or ridicule Confucianism. When the universal and fundamental reason to learn Confucianism is found, Confucianism will be genuinely appreciated, and open-mindedness to other teachings will naturally follow because other teachings may share the universal and fundamental essence with Confucianism. Further, even if the *raison d'être* of Confucianism was found with the aid of other teachings – Li mentions his absorption of Buddhism as an opportunity for his true learning, there would be no problem for Li Zhi in so far as one can genuinely appreciate the purport of Confucius' teaching. And if there are persons who have the purport of Confucianism without learning Confucianism, for example, the ancient sages before the birth of Confucius, their thought can be called Confucianism without Confucius and the title, “Confucianism.” To this effect, Li Zhi's Confucianism can be called a “non-determinable radicalism (fundamentalism)” in that Confucianism without Confucius and Confucianism with different titles are all possible because the most important point is whether or not it is based on the truth:

Argument on the reduction of the three teachings into Confucianism

Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist teachings are all one; all of them originated from their wish to hear *Dao* (*wendao* 聞道).

Confucians would not want to die until they heard *Dao*. Thus, [Confucius] said, “If I hear *Dao* in the morning, I will have no regret even if I die in the evening.” [Analects 4:8] [Confucians thought that] if they did not hear *Dao*, they could not afford to die; accordingly, Confucius said to Yan Yuan 顏淵, “I thought you have already died [in vain without hearing *Dao*]” [“How do I dare to die notwithstanding Master (who will tell me about *Dao*) is still alive?” Yan replied.] [Analects 11:22] Since only their wish was to hear *Dao*, they viewed wealth and ranks as transient affairs like floating clouds, and sometimes left behind the world as one throws away his old hat (shoes). But their view on wealth and ranks, namely, to treat them as

³²⁵ “Zan Liuxie” 贊劉諧 (A praise of Liu Xie), Zashu, *FS,juan 3*, p. 130.

floating clouds and old shoes is to look down upon them, but not to regard them as harmful.

[On the other hand,] Daoists regard wealth and ranks as excrement and dirt, and they view the world as shackles... Buddhists are even more serious than Daoists. They compare wealth and ranks to the situations in which tigers and leopards are entrapped into pitfalls, and fish and birds are captured into nets, and live humans plunge into boiling water and flames. All these situations are so serious in that one cannot die even if one wants to die; one cannot live even if one wants to live.

Although there are differences among them [in their views on wealth and ranks], their wish to hear *Dao* and transcend the world (*chushi* 出世) is one (the same). Generally, only after one can transcend the world can one escape from the sufferings caused by wealth and ranks.

... Today if one sincerely wants to discourse on the learning of *Dao*, and thereby seeks Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist [common] purport of transcendence from the world and emancipates from the sufferings caused by wealth and ranks, one cannot but shave one's hair and become a monk by all means.

三教歸儒說: 儒、道、釋之學, 一也, 以其初皆期於聞道也。必聞道然後可以死, 故曰: “朝聞道, 夕死可矣。”非聞道則未可以死, 故又曰, “吾以死為死矣。”唯志在聞道, 故其視富貴若浮雲, 棄天下如敝屣然也。然曰浮雲, 直輕之耳; 曰敝屣, 直賤之耳: 未以為害也。若夫道人則視富貴如糞穢, 視有天下若枷鎖, ... 乃釋子則又甚矣。彼其視富貴若虎豹之在陷阱, 魚鳥之入網羅, 活人之赴湯火然, 求死不得, 求生不得, 一如是甚也。此儒、道、釋之所以異也, 然其期於聞道以出世一也。蓋必出世, 然後可以免富貴之苦也。... 今之欲真實講道學以求儒、道、釋出世之旨, 免富貴之苦者, 斷斷乎不可以不剃頭做和尚矣。³²⁶

Although the title says “the three teachings can be reduced to Confucianism,” Li holds ironically that whoever wants to attain the ultimate goal in his time has to tonsure her/his hair, to become a monk. His seemingly contradictory assertion needs to be interpreted and appreciated from his fundamental perspective. As far as the three teachings can be identified in terms of the same origin, *Dao*, and the most important point is whether or not we achieve the ultimate goal, ‘*chushi*’ (transcendence or emancipation from worldly desire), the titles of the teachings are not important. In other words, the three teachings can be reduced to Buddhism and Daoism as well. In fact, as a student of Yangming learning, Li Zhi was influenced by Yangming’s open-minded view on the three teachings; as was shown, his encounter with Yangming learning was also the critical momentum for his re-appreciation of Buddhism and Daoism:

³²⁶ “Sanjiao guiru shuo,” *ibid*.

Zhang Yuanchong [1502-1563, styled Fufeng 浮峰] on board asked, “Laozi and Buddha are slightly different from the sagely learning [i.e., Confucianism], and their teaching can be also regarded as based on nature and destiny [from heaven]; nevertheless, Laozi and Buddha apply [a concern for] selfish profit to [learning of] nature and destiny. Consequently, they are enormously incorrect. However, their teaching seems to be effective to our cultivation to some extent, and so I am not sure if we have to combine Confucianism with [the teaching of] Laozi and Buddha to take them together.”

張元沖在舟中問，“二氏與聖人之學所差毫釐，謂其皆有得於性命也。但二氏於性命中著些私利，便謬千里矣。今觀二氏作用，亦有功於吾身者，不知亦須兼取否？”

Master Yangming replied, ‘If you describe it as ‘combine and take,’ it is incorrect. The [Confucian] sages can exhaust nature and fulfill the destiny (*ming* 命). Thus, what kind of [learning] do they have not [in their minds]? Why do they have to combine things to take them? The effects (practices) of Laozi and Buddha’s teaching are all the effect of our Confucianism, [if any]. In other words, if I can exhaust my nature and fulfill my destiny, thereby completing the cultivation of my body, then I can be called a Daoist immortal; if not polluted by the worldly desires, I can be called a Buddha. However, Confucians in later periods do not understand the wholeness of Confucianism. Accordingly, they [deliberately] constitute a separate theory which is different from Laozi and Buddha. Let’s say that there is a building which has three rooms – as a matter of course, all rooms altogether constitute a single building. However, since all Confucians do not know the [whole range of utility of] our Confucianism, when they see Buddha, they give the left-side room to Buddha; when they see Laozi, they give the right-side room to Laozi, and they [just try to] occupy the middle room. This is to take one and discard all the rest. The sage, heaven and earth, people, and all other things are one body; therefore, Confucius, Buddha, Laozi, and Zhuangzi can be all useful to me. This is called the Great *Dao*. Laozi and Buddha are self-interested and concerned about their bodies only. This is called the small *Dao*.”

先生曰，“說兼取，便不是。聖人盡性至命，何物不具，何待兼取？二氏之用，皆我之用，即吾盡性至命中完養此身謂之仙，即吾盡性至命中不染世累謂之佛。但後世儒者不見聖學之全，故與二氏成二見耳。譬之廳堂三間共為一廳，儒者不知皆吾所用，見佛氏，則割左邊一間與之；見老氏，則割右邊一間與之；而已則自處中間，皆舉一而廢百也。聖人與天地民物同體，儒、佛、老、莊皆吾之用，是之謂大道。二氏自私其身，是之謂小道。”³²⁷

Yangming suggests that one can appreciate and use all other teachings, depending on the degrees of one’s inner cultivation, i.e., enlightenment on nature and destiny, which no doubt inculcates Li Zhi on universal reasons for learning and, as a result, open-mindedness to Buddhism and Daoism. Nevertheless, Yangming maintains a condescending air, claiming that Confucianism already has the good points and effects of other teachings, regarding the genuine

³²⁷ In the Mount Xiao 蕭, Nov., 1523 (the lunatic calendar), *Nianpu* 年譜 3, Shunsheng lu 順生錄 10, *Wang yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *juan* 4. Julia Ching’s translation (excerpt) is available; *To Acquire Wisdom*, p. 155.

Confucianism as the Great *Dao* and the others as the small *Dao*; i.e., their best points are at best second best. In fact, for Yangming the perils of Buddhist and Daoist practice, i.e., the immoral denial of family relationship by Buddhist monks and the pipe dream of Daoist Yoga practice (*daoyinshu* 導引術) have to be borne in mind.³²⁸ Wang Ji whom Li Zhi admires has a similar viewpoint on Buddhism and Daoism although Wang Ji seems to be a little more open-minded:

- a) “If someone studies Daoism or Buddhism and yet is able to satisfy the criterion of “returning to one’s true nature,” without getting lost in wild and preserve ways, then he is a Daoist or Buddhist Confucian. If someone is a Confucian, and yet makes selfish use of his learning and cannot keep to normal standards in common dealings, then he is no less deviationist or unorthodox for being labeled a Confucian.”³²⁹
- b) “There is only the slightest difference between our Confucian way and Buddhism and Daoism, yet it lies precisely in this: that they [the Buddhists and Daoists] are obsessed with the after-traces of [the self’s] involvement with things and identify with what is evanescent, rather than basing themselves on innate knowing as the means of finding what must be gotten for oneself.”³³⁰

However, as we have already seen, taking another step forward from Yangming and Wang Ji, Li Zhi claims no superiority of Confucianism and makes Confucianism open-ended, thereby trying to highlight the fundamental and universal relevance of Confucianism. This is the “non-determinable and radical” characteristic of Li Zhi’s Confucianism.

2-3) *Childlike mind and True Emptiness:*

The culmination of Li’s Syncretism and Non-determinable Radicalism

³²⁸ In Jingshi 京師, Oct., 1502 (the lunatic calendar), *Nianpu* 1, Shunsheng lu 8, *ibid.* “This [Daoist practice] to gain the essential spirit is not in accordance with [the right] *Dao*.” (此簸弄精神, 非道也.), “This [natural] affection [for family] has been with me since my childhood. To discard it is to destroy the original nature!” (此念生於孩提. 此念可去, 是斷滅種性矣.) This article records an episode that Yangming realized the irrelevance of Buddhist practice and monkhood, scolding a monk beside him and teaching the truth of the original nature of human being, i.e. Confucianism. Refer to Frederick Goodrich Henke, *The Philosophy of Wang Yang-Ming* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Co., 1964), pp. 9-11.

³²⁹ W.T de Bary, Wang Chi and Freedom of Innate Knowing, *ibid.*, p. 142.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 141. For Wang Ji’s various criticisms of Buddhism and Daoism, refer to the record by Sanshanlizhe 三山麗澤 III, Yulu, *Longxi wang xiansheng quanji* 龍溪王先生全集, *juan* 1.

This section presents a general introduction of Li Zhi's philosophy by discussing the concepts of "Childlike mind" (*tongxin* 童心) and "True Emptiness" (*zhenkong* 真空). As will be discussed, both are correlated and of critical importance to understanding Li Zhi's thought in that they are not only most outstanding but also seamlessly bridge the gap between Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. However, that bridging is not a deliberate process but the natural effect of Li Zhi's belief in the universal *Dao*. In other words, both concepts materialize Li's belief, thereby enabling various strains of thought to interplay in the world of Li's thought.

Li Zhi criticizes Chinese literati's blind admiration of ancient literatures by drawing on the concept, "Childlike mind." Since the article where the concept is suggested is crucial to our discussion, it deserves a full translation:

- I. In the last part of his preface to the story of the *Western chamber* (*Xixiang ji* 西廂記), Longdong Shannong 龍洞山農³³¹ said, "You, literates might as well not say that I still have the Childlike mind (*tongxin* 童心)." Generally, the Childlike mind is the genuine mind (*zhenxin* 真心). If the Childlike mind is regarded as "undesirable" (*buke* 不可), then the genuine mind will be regarded as "undesirable." Generally, the Childlike mind is that which is never hypocrite but pure and genuine, i.e., the original mind (*benxin* 本心) that is [seen] in the very first thought after one's birth. If one loses the Childlike mind, one will lose the genuine mind; if one loses the genuine mind, one will lose the genuine personality (*zhenren* 真人). If a person does not have the genuine integrity (*zhenquan* 真全), she/he cannot restore the beginning [of her/his mind].

龍洞山農敘西廂末語云, "知者, 勿謂我尚有童心, 可也。" 夫童心者, 真心也。若以童心為不可, 是以真心為不可也。夫童心者, 絕假純真最初一念之本心也。若失卻童心, 便失卻真心; 失卻真心, 便失卻真人。人而非真全, 不復有初矣。

- II. [Being a] Child is the beginning [feature] of being human; the Childlike mind is the beginning of human heart-mind. How can we lose the beginning of the heart-mind [in principle]? But how come we lose the Childlike mind suddenly [in practice]? Generally speaking, the beginning of such a loss is that what is heard and seen by the ears and eyes come inside [our heart-mind], mastering over the inside, so that the Childlike mind is thus lost. When one grows up, [various kinds of] reasons and principles come inside in experiencing (hearing and seeing) [various things], and they

³³¹ This figure is unidentified. Generally, it has been regarded as Yan Jun 顏鈞 (1504-1596, styled Shannong 山農). However, according to a recent study, Jiao Hong seems to be the very person, Longdong shannong; Jiao put punctuation marks on the *Western chamber* and seems to have used the styled name, whereas Yan Jun did not have a work on it. Refer to Li Jianxiong 李劍雄, *Jiao hong pingzhuan* 焦竑評傳 (Nanjing daxue chubanshu, 1983).

come to control the inside of us, so that the Childlike mind is lost. As time goes by, we have more and more reasons, principles, hearing, and seeing, and what we can understand and receive increases everyday. Subsequently, we come to know that fame is worth liking, and we strive for a good reputation, so that the Childlike mind is lost. [Likewise,] we come to know that disgrace is worth abhorring, and we strive to escape from disgrace, so that the Childlike mind is lost.

童子者, 人之初也; 童心者, 心之初也. 夫心之初曷可失也! 然童心胡然而遽失也? 蓋方其始也, 有聞見日耳目而入, 而以為主於其內而童心失. 其長也, 有道理日聞見而入, 而以為主於其內而童心失; 其久也, 道理聞見日以益多, 則所知所覺日以益廣, 於是焉又知美名之可好也, 而務欲以揚之而童心失. 知不美之名之可醜也, 而務欲以掩之而童心失.

III. Generally, various reasons, principles, and experiences (hearing and seeing) come from reading various books and learning (knowing) principles for righteousness. How can it be likely that the sages of old did not read books? But even if they did not read books, their Childlike minds existed in them indeed, and even if they read books, they protected their Childlike minds and did not lose them. Their case is not like [the ordinary case that] learners obstruct [their Childlike minds] by reading many books and knowing principles for righteousness. If generally, learners obstruct their Childlike minds by reading many books and learning (knowing) principles regarding righteousness, why did the sages write so many books and put forward many theories, thereby hindering learners? If the Childlike mind is already blocked, his words are not faithful although he wants to [really] express himself in language; even if he is recruited to do governmental business, his administration has no basis; even if he composes, his composition cannot be far-reaching, for its contents do not make his work beautiful, nor does it (the style) luster; although he seeks a phrase of compliment [from others], he cannot gain it. What causes this to happen? It is because his Childlike mind is blocked and what comes from outside [i.e., experiences and principles] become [the main body of] his heart-mind.

夫道理聞見皆自多讀書識義理而來也. 古之聖人曷嘗不讀書哉! 然縱不讀書, 童心固自在也. 縱多讀書, 亦以護此童心而使之勿失焉耳, 非若學者反以多讀書識義理而反障之也. 夫學者既以多讀書識義理障其童心矣, 聖人又何用多著書立言以障學人為耶? 童心既障, 於是發而為言語, 則言語不由衷; 見而為政事, 則政事無根抵; 著而為文辭, 則文辭不能達. 非內含以章美也, 非篤實生輝光也, 欲求一句有德之言, 卒不可得. 所以者何? 以童心既障, 而以從外入者聞見道理為之心也.

IV. Generally, if experiences and principles become one's heart-mind, all that which he tells are the words of experiences and principles, not the words from one's Childlike mind. Even if the expression of such words is embroidered, what kind of meaning does it have to me? How can it be otherwise than phony people speak phony words and do phony jobs and make phony compositions? Generally, if a person is phony, his everything cannot but be phony. Accordingly, if phony people speak phony words to other phony people, [all] phony people are delighted; if phony people discuss business with other phony people, [all] phony people are delighted; if phony people make phony compositions, discussing them with phony people, [all] phony people are delighted. Because there is no such a thing that is not phony in them, there is no such a thing that they cannot be delighted with [although everything is phony]. The whole house is full of phony [people and things], how can a dwarf [who just mimics others' acclamation of the circus] discern [the real and phony acclamation]? If this is the case, there must have been such works that were exquisite but burnt by phony people and

not handed down to descendants [because phony people could not appreciate real works] – how could the number of such cases be small! Why does this happen?

夫既以聞見道理為心矣，則所言者皆聞見道理之言，非童心自出之言也。言雖工，於我何與，豈非以假人言假言，而事假事文假文乎？蓋其人既假，則無所不假矣。由是而以假言與假人言，則假人喜；以假事與假人道，則假人喜；以假文與假人談，則假人喜。無所不假，則無所不喜。滿場是假，矮人何辯也？然則雖有天下之至文，其湮滅於假人而不盡見於後世者，又豈少哉！何也？

V. The finest masterpieces cannot but be produced by the Childlike mind. If the Childlike mind could be maintained, then reason and experiences could not affect us, and any writings are good whenever written, whoever is the writer, and whichever style is used. Why must we select exemplary poems from the *Anthology of Literature* (*Wenxuan* 文選, also known as *Guxuan* 古選); why should we regard pre-Qin's writings as exemplary? In the Six dynasties, the style of poetry changed into the Modern (rhythmical) style (*jinti* 近體). The styles of composition varied more later on; the Literary Tales (*zhuanqi* 傳奇), then the Variety Plays style of the Song 宋 (*yuanben* 院本; Professional Script), and, later, the Drama script of the Yuan 元 (*zaju* 雜劇). The *Story of the Western Chamber*, the *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳), and today's style for national recruit examination (*juziye* 舉子業; *baguwen* 八股文) have come about as a result of change. All these are the masterpieces of the past and present, and so we should not evaluate them on the criterion, 'the older it is, the better it is.' Accordingly, I am moved by those which were written spontaneously out of the Childlike mind. Why must I talk about the Six Confucian Classics? Why must I talk about the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Mencius*?

天下之至文，未有不出於童心焉者也。苟童心常存，則道理不行，聞見不立，無時不文，無人不文，無一樣創制體格文字而非文者。詩何必古選，文何必先秦。降而為六朝，變而為近體，又變而為傳奇，變而為院本，為雜劇，為西廂曲，為水滸傳，為今之舉子業，皆古今至文，不可得而時勢先後論也。故吾因是而有感於童心者之自文也，更說甚麼六經？更說甚麼語孟乎？

VI. Generally speaking, the Six Confucian Classics, the *Analects of Confucius*, and the *Mencius* are filled with words of admiration by historians and eulogies and glorification by emperors' subjects and children. They are nothing but arbitrary records with much distortion and omission by dull followers and stupid disciples. Later scholars do not examine them closely and believe they are what originated from the sages' words, designating them as the Confucian canon. Who can know that they are not the words of the sages? Even if they were the sages' words, they must have had practical purposes, which were proper but temporal prescriptions to enlighten stupid disciples and dull followers, case by case. The prescriptions against phony diseases are hard to rely on, and so how can they be the supreme teachings for tens of thousands years? So the Six Confucian Classics, the *Analects of Confucius*, and the *Mencius* have become an excuse for the [hypocrite] learning of *Dao* and a den of phony people. Hence, it is obvious that they cannot speak out of the Childlike mind. Alas! How can I meet the genuine sages who have never lost their Childlike minds and have a discussion with them about literature?

夫六經、語、孟，非其史官過為褒崇之詞，則其臣子極為贊美之語。又不然，則其迂闊門徒，懵懂弟子，記憶師說，有頭無尾，得後遺前，隨其所見，筆之於書。後學不察，便謂出自聖人之口也，決定目之為經矣，孰知其大半非聖人之言乎？縱出自聖人，要亦有為而發，不過因病發藥，隨時處方，以裒此一等懵懂弟子，迂闊門徒云耳。藥醫假病，方難定執，是豈可遽以為萬世之至論乎？然則六經、語、孟，乃道學之口實，假人之淵藪

也, 斷斷乎其不可以語於童心之言明矣. 嗚呼! 吾又安得真正大聖人童心未曾失者而與之一言文哉!³³²

As generally accepted, the Childlike mind derives from various strains of thought. In a sense, Li's understanding of the various schools of Chinese thought can be said to flow into/from the concept. However, as Mizoguchi Yuzo and de Bary point out, we need to take into account the uniqueness of Li Zhi's thought as well.³³³ Thus, I discuss the relationship of the Childlike mind with the various schools of thought first and then suggest the uniqueness of the concept. This will be clearer in the discussion of True emptiness in relation to the Childlike mind.

A. Childlike mind and Confucianism

First of all, we notice that the concept of Childlike mind has an immediate relationship with Wang Yangming's "innate knowing" (*liangzhi* 良知) which originates from the *Mencius* 7A:15 and relates to the Neo-Confucian concept of nature (*xing*) as a reified principle (*li* = *Dao*) because Li's rendering of Childlike mind as the genuine mind (*zhenxin*) and the original mind (*benxin*) (I) is similar to Yangming's definition of "innate knowing" as the original state of the heart-mind (*xin zhi bentu* 心之本體) or nature as *li* in human beings.

However, the Childlike mind can be associated not only with Yangming's thought but also directly with the *Mencius* and Cheng-Zhu Confucianism. The innate knowing in the *Mencius* 7A:15 is explained as the inborn knowledge or capacity possessed even by "children" (*haiti zhi tong* 孩提之童), and the "Heart-mind of infants" (*chizi zhi xin* 赤子之心) from the *Mencius* 4B:12 too can be thought to be a source of Li Zhi's Childlike mind. Zhu Xi's

³³² *Tongxin shuo* 童心說, Zhashu, *FS*, *juan* 3, pp. 98-99.

³³³ Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, Kim Yong-Cheon 김용천 trans., *Jungkuk jeonkeundae sasang-ui kuljeol-kwa jeonkae* 중국 전근대 사상의 굴절과 전개 (Seoul: Dongkwaseo, 1999); Originally, *Chugoku zen-kindai shiso no kussetsu to tenkai* 中國前近代思想の屈折と展開 (Tokyo: Tokyodai, 1980) and W.T. de Bary, *ibid*.

comments on the *Mencius* 4B:12 help reveal the Childlike mind's relation to Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism:

<p><i>It is what the great man is [all about] that he does not lose the heart-mind of his childhood.</i></p>	<p>[Zhu Xi's commentary]</p>
<p>孟子曰，大人者，不失其赤子之心者也。</p>	<p>The great man's heart-mind penetrates all changes, and <u>the heart-mind of an infant is entirely pure and not hypocritical</u>. But <u>the reason why a great man is great is that he is not attracted by external things, and thereby keeps intact the original state of his purity and non-hypocrisy</u>. If he develops [the original purity and non-hypocrisy], filling himself with it, he becomes omniscient and omnipotent, reaching the culmination of greatness.</p>
<p>(Mengzi 4B:12)</p>	<p>大人之心，通達萬變；赤子之心，則純一無偽而已。然大人之所以爲大人，正以其不爲物誘，而有以全其純一無偽之本然。是以擴而充之，則無所不知 無所不能，而極其大也。(Mengzi jizhu 4B:12)</p>

Li Zhi's explanation of the Childlike mind as the pure and non-hypocritical mind echoes Zhu Xi's interpretation of the "heart-mind of an infant" and the quality of the "great man." According to Zhu Xi, the quality of a great man is that he is not influenced by external phenomena but remains secure in his original nature, i.e., the heart-mind of his childhood. This means that petty men are what they are because they are influenced by external phenomena, thus losing their childhood's mind. A similar idea is suggested by Li Zhi (II, III, and IV).

In addition, the notion of the "restoration of [the original] nature" (*fluxing*), which is emphasized by the Cheng-Zhu school, is seen also in Li Zhi's Childlike mind (I and II). In other words, the Childlike mind is understood as something that needs to be restored rather than something that can be taken for granted always. This suggests that the Childlike mind is a goal to be achieved as well as what is given, just as the original nature of human beings in the Cheng-Zhu school and the innate knowing in the Yangming school are.

B. Buddhist and Daoist influences on the Childlike mind

Apart from (Neo-) Confucian influences, the influence from Buddhism and Daoism is apparent. The terms, the "genuine mind (*zhenxin*)" and the "genuine personality (*zhenren*)" are undoubtedly reminiscent of (Chan) Buddhism and Daoism (particularly the *Zhuangzi*). As

Mizoguchi Yūzō mentions,³³⁴ the genuine mind is a term used by Zongmi 宗密 (780-841, styled Guifeng 圭峰), who is considered to have been conducive to the formation of Neo-Confucianism:

The teaching of the one vehicle that reveals “nature” (*xing* 性) tells that all kinds of sentient beings have the genuine mind (*zhenxin* 真心) that contains the intrinsic enlightenment (*benjue* 本覺). From time without beginning, it has constantly existed [in all sentient beings] with its purity. It is shining, un-obscured, clear, and bright ever-present awareness. It is called both the Buddha-nature (*foxing* 佛性) and the storehouse consciousness (*tathāgatagarbha*; *rulaizang* 如來藏). From time without beginning, deluded thought cover it, and [sentient beings] by themselves are not aware of it. This is because they recognize their ordinary qualities, they become indulgently attached, enmeshed in karma (*ye* 業), and experience the suffering of birth and death. The great enlightened one pitied them and taught that each and everything is empty. He further revealed that the purity of the genuine mind that has the numinous enlightenment is completely the same as [the quality of] all Buddhas.³³⁵

一乘顯性教者，說一切有情皆有本覺真心。無始以來常住清淨，昭昭不昧了了常知，亦名佛性，亦名如來藏。從無始際，妄相翳之不自覺知，但認凡質故，耽著結業受生死苦。大覺愍之，說一切皆空，又開示靈覺真心清淨全同諸佛。³³⁶

The *zhenxin* in Zongmi’s context relates closely to the Buddhist concept of *xing* or *foxing*: both *zhenxin* and *xing* (*foxing*, *rulaizang*) can be regarded as precedent for the Neo-Confucian *xing* concept and Yangming’s concept of *liangzhi*. It is what is given and what is to be achieved (restored). Judging from this, the Childlike mind as *zhenxin* can be thought to be indebted to Buddhism, i.e., Zongmi’s *zhenxin* and *xing*. On the other hand, the “genuine person (*zhenren*)” in Li Zhi can be regarded as congenial with a favorite and famous term of Chan Master Linji 臨濟 (?-867, Yixuan 義玄), “a genuine man with no rank”:

Master Linji ascended the hall and said, “Here in this lump of red flesh there is “a Genuine man with no rank (*wuwei zhenren* 無位真人).” Constantly he goes in and out of the gates of your face. If there are any of you who don’t know this for a fact, then *look! Look!*” At the time there was a monk who came forward and asked, “What is he like – the Genuine man with no rank?” Master got down from his chair, seized hold of

³³⁴ Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, *ibid.*, p. 247.

³³⁵ Translation is adapted from Peter N. Gregory ed. and trans., *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity: An annotated translation of Tsung-mi’s Yuan jen lun with a modern commentary* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), p. 178.

³³⁶ Zongmi, *Yuanren lun* 原人論, T.1886: Bk.45, 710a11-16.

the monk and said, “Speak! Speak!” The monk was about to say something, whereupon Master let go of him, shoved him away, and said, “Genuine Man with no rank – what a shitty ass-wiper!” Master then returned to his quarters.³³⁷

上堂云, 赤肉團上, 有一無位真人, 常從汝等諸人面門出入。未證據者, 看看! 時有僧出問, “如何は無位真人?” 師下禪牀, 把住云, “道! 道!” 其僧擬議, 師托開云, “無位真人, 是什麼乾屎橛?” 便歸方丈。³³⁸

A “Genuine man” with no rank (*wuwei zhenren*) can be interpreted as the innermost self of everyone as ‘what is given,’ and yet it can be the ideal self that one must make an endeavor to grasp it (“*Look! Look!*”). Likewise, the genuine person (*zhenren*) in Li Zhi is the innate truth in one’s self as well as the passion to strive for being a genuine man. The term, “a genuine man” has its origin in the *Zhuangzi* Ch. 6,³³⁹ the idea of which is parallel with that of Linji. Ch. 6 of the *Zhuangzi* shows an interesting point for our discussion:

It is the supreme [knowledge] that one can discern what is done by Heaven (*tian*) from what is done by human. He who understands what is done by Heaven can live in compliance to Heaven; he who understands what is done by humans can, by using the existing knowledge, extend (nourish) [the range of] his knowledge into what is yet unknown to him ... Even so, there is a problem here. Generally, our understanding (knowledge) can become abundant only after it has a reliable basis, but the basis of our understanding seems to be unreliable. [In other words,] how can we assure ourselves that what I call Heaven has nothing to do with human? How can we assure ourselves that what I call human has nothing to do with Heaven? And [in terms of subject of knowledge] only after there is a *genuine man*, can there be *genuine knowledge*. What kind of person is called a genuine man? The genuine man of old did not care about poverty, nor did he brag about compliments, nor did he plan to get things done...

知天之所爲, 知人之所爲者, 至矣。知天之所爲者, 天而生也。知人之所爲者, 以其知之所知, 以養其知之所不知 ... 雖然, 有患。知有所待而後當, 其所待者特未定也。庸詎知吾所謂天之非人乎? 所謂人之非天乎? 且有真人而後有真知。何謂真人? 古之真人, 不逆寡, 不雄成, 不謨士...³⁴⁰

³³⁷ The above translation is, with some modification, from Burton Watson, *The Zen Teachings of Master Lin-chi: a translation of the Lin-chi lu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 13.

³³⁸ *Linji huizhao wengong dazongshi yulu* 臨濟慧照文公大宗師語錄, T.1985: Bk.47, 496c10-14.

³³⁹ Yilji 一指 trans., *Yimje rok* 임제록臨濟錄, Annotated and commented by Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, (Seoul: Koryowon, 1988), p. 67.

³⁴⁰ *Zhuangzi* 6:3. The above translation is focused more on the meaning than on the original syntax.

The genuine man's knowledge cannot but be genuine, as he or his knowledge describes the reality as it is. It is in this sense that Master Linji used the "genuine man" as the term for the innermost self as the given potential for enlightenment or Buddhahood.

Of particular interest is that the genuine man in the *Zhuangzi* amalgamates or penetrates both what is Heavenly and what is human. All his behaviors are human because they are exhibited by the "man," and yet they are all Heavenly too because they are caused by the genuine (true) nature of the genuine man – the true nature is nothing but what is Heavenly. In a similar way, we can interpret the genuine personality, i.e., Childlike mind in Li Zhi (I) as amalgamating or penetrating both what is Heavenly and what is human. Li explains that the Childlike mind is observable in one's childhood or right after one's birth; behaviors of children are initially spontaneous rather than deliberate. However, children's behaviors are not totally free from their inborn and growing intelligence; nevertheless, their intelligence is not used to the degree at which their nature is hypocritically expressed. Therefore, their use of intelligence is also regarded as being part of nature, i.e., what is Heavenly. Indeed the concept of Childlike mind reflects the ideal of a "genuine man" who nullifies rather an arbitrary and unachievable demarcation of what is Heavenly and what is human.

C. Import of the Childlike mind

Our discussion of the import of Li Zhi's Childlike mind can begin with a comparison with the *Zhuangzi*. Children and a man of Childlike mind are not indifferent to their basic need for clothing, food, and the like, which is different from the *Zhuangzi*'s genuine man of old. Children's being childlike consists in their natural expressions of emotions and desires for basic need. And, by definition, natural expressions entail diversity rather than uniformity in appearance although the causes of their natural expressions can be reduced to the matter of their daily needs; human behavior and expression take diverse forms in diverse situations. This

outcome of the Childlike mind, i.e., diversity in expression is emphasized by Li Zhi (Refer to V). Moreover, the diversity caused by the Childlike mind will be amplified over time just as the history of literature shows. This suggests that Li Zhi's Childlike mind does not function as an overarching entity or a regulating authority, for example, *lǐ* 理 to be expressed in the form of *lǐ* 禮, or propriety, but it functions as the seed for cultural flourishing. To this effect, the Childlike mind is the common and least denominator of variously manifested sincere expressions and behaviors; insofar as one retains the Childlike mind, one's liberal expressions in literature and social activities are acceptable. This is obviously a radical and optimistic attitude toward possible and yet unpredictable changes. As seen in the passage, (V), various expressions caused by the Childlike mind can constitute a new genre in literature and a new system of propriety in society. Despite various changes over time, the genesis will be the same, i.e., the Childlike mind, and Li Zhi believes that all changes should and can meet the demands of societies at each period.³⁴¹ Accordingly, for Li Zhi Confucian scholars' excessive attachment to the ancient scriptures without taking care of contemporary problems is nothing but anachronism; they not only fail to appreciate the genuine value of Confucianism, i.e., the sages' genuine heart and concern about their contemporary problems, but also block their own

³⁴¹ Mizoguchi Yūzō holds that the reason why Li Zhi used the terms, "Childlike mind" and "Genuine mind" is because he must have wanted to capture the daily, common, vivid, and secular aspects of human life, and that Li Zhi wanted to search for new contents of morality. (Mizoguchi Yūzō, *ibid.*) Basically, I agree with the insight of Prof. Mizoguchi; my analysis is indebted to his insight and scholarship. Nevertheless, for me, it is still open to question whether Li Zhi was in search of "new contents" of morality because once we assume that Li was in search for concrete "new contents," then we are likely to pave the way for de Bary's evaluation of Li's thought that he failed to suggest a blue print for the future, i.e. "public philosophy or infrastructure of laws and institutions" and the cause of Li's failure was that his thought was not inherited by later leading figures in culture and politics. (Refer to de Bary, *ibid.*, p. 270.) But, as Mizoguchi clarifies in his remark on Shimada Kenji's study on Li Zhi, such kind of evaluation by Shimada and de Bary is unacceptable; for Mizoguchi, Li Zhi's legacy seems to have been "historically" inherited by later scholars despite their scathing criticism against Li. Hence, for me it seems to be more consistent to think that Li Zhi was 'making room for' and 'waiting for' changes yet to happen by shaking the established rather than in search of new contents.

Childlike mind, thereby corrupting their culture and society. (Refer to VI) Li Zhi's *prima facie* depreciative attitude toward the Confucian *Analects*, the *Mencius*, etc. should not be read as constituting anti-Confucianism but as defying the superficial understanding and pride of would-be Confucians.

If we are forced to clarify the philosophical constitution of the Childlike mind in terms congenial to Neo-Confucian metaphysics, it cannot but be the ideal amalgamation of *li* and *qi* because it traverses both spiritual and physical aspects of human life. Accordingly, the Childlike mind as both what is given and what is to be achieved is neither purely spiritual potential for enlightenment nor a purely spiritual enlightenment. Rather, it is both physical and spiritual condition of a real human as what is given and what is to be 'liberally realized.' Li Zhi's open-mindedness about various literary styles attests to his concern for physicality, and the Childlike mind can be regarded as a linkage of spirituality and physicality.

D. Childlike mind and True Emptiness

Li Zhi's concern for physicality relates closely to the concept, "True Emptiness," too, which is the total negation of thingness (*you*)/nothingness (*wu*) or form (*se* 色)/emptiness (*kong* 空). Li associates this *prima facie* purely negative True Emptiness with his positive attitude toward physicality that can be 'secularly' translated as "wearing clothing," "eating food," and even "excretion":

[Such daily affairs as] wearing clothing and eating food contain the principles regarding human relationships and all other things. Without them we cannot discuss the principles regarding human relationships and all other things. Various kinds of things in the world are all about wearing clothing, eating food, and excretion. Hence, if we discuss clothing and food, various kinds of things in the world are naturally included in them. If one says that there are various kinds of things that have nothing to do with clothing and food, those things should not be in common with people's life. Learners ought to understand the True Emptiness (*zhenkong*), based on morality and all other things, and their criticism [on morality and all other things] must not be [one-dimensionally confined] within morality and all other things. This is why Mencius said, "Shun clearly understood all kinds of things [first] and saw through morality in human relationships [next]." [*Mencius* 4B:19] If our illuminating insight is

used, based on [concrete] human relationships and all other things, we can penetrate the root and the genuine [of all myriad things]. Otherwise, we cannot but [superficially] fathom and [roughly] calculate human relationships and all other things one-dimensionally (on the very level of them), so that we will never be able to gain self-attainment (zide). The difference between being derivative and tedious and being simple and easy [in learning and practice] consists just in this. If one can clearly understand the True Emptiness, then one can “behave [naturally] out of humanity and righteousness” [4B:19]; if one cannot clearly understand [the True Emptiness], one cannot but “[deliberately] practice humanity and righteousness,” [4B:19] making [his learning and practice] derivative and tedious; nevertheless, one cannot be aware of it by oneself. Be careful about this!

穿衣吃飯，即是人倫物理；除却穿衣吃飯，無倫物矣。世間種種，皆衣與飯糞耳。故舉衣與飯而世間種種自然在其中，非衣食之外，更有所謂種種絕與百姓不相同者也。學者只宜於倫物上識真空，不當於倫物上辨倫物。故曰，“明於庶物，察於人倫。”於倫物上加明察，則可以達本而識真源。否則，只在倫物上計較忖度，終無自得之日矣。支離易簡之辨，正在於此。明察得真空，則為由仁義行；不明察，則為行仁義入於支離而不自覺矣。可不慎乎！³⁴²

The first sentence is one of the most famous sayings of Li Zhi. Because of this, Li Zhi has been regarded as a materialist. Indeed the sentence reflects Li’s insight into human society and culture in that virtually all moral values and social systems are developed in order to deal with various problems caused by human activities for subsistence; therefore, if one can clearly understand human activities for subsistence, one can naturally have a better understanding of the principles of all other things as well. However, as subsequently seen, Li Zhi’s attention to daily affairs cannot be identical with a sort of materialism to give priority to physicality only. Li emphasizes that one must not discuss morality and all other things one-dimensionally but ought to traverse both the “True Emptiness” and practical daily affairs (and all other things). This idea clearly shows Buddhist influence on Li. Perhaps, most readers are reminded of the famous Chan (Zen) teaching of Mazu 馬祖 (lit. Patriarch Ma, 709-788, also known as Jiangxi daoyi 江西道一):

Each and everything is the teaching of Buddha, and all kinds of things contain the enlightenment. The enlightenment is nothing but [the awareness of] things as they are (*zhenru* 真如), and nothing is exceptional to [the truth of] ‘things as they are.’ [If one is enlightened,] walking, staying, sitting, and lying down are all done without deliberation. [Hence,] a Sutra says, “Buddha is anywhere and anytime.” ‘Buddha’

³⁴² “Da Deng Shiyang” 答鄧石陽, *FS*, *juan* 1, pp. 4-5.

refers to the capacity for generosity (*ren* 仁: humanity). The wisdom and good nature [of Buddha] scatter the tangled suspicions of all sentient beings. [Thus, sentient beings] escape the confinement within [the concept of] nothingness (*wu*) and thingness (*you*), have no discernment of sageness from ordinariness, [come to know] people and things are all empty (*kong*), go beyond number and amount (earthly calculation), have no doubt about their actions, and penetrate both principle (*li*) and things (*shi*: affairs).

一切法皆是佛法, 諸法既是解脫. 解脫者既是真如, 諸法不出於真如. 行住坐臥是悉是不思議用, 不待時節. 經云, “在在處處 則為有佛.” 佛是能仁, 有智慧善機情, 能破一切衆生疑網, 出離有無等縛, 凡聖情盡, 人法俱空, 轉無等輪, 超於數量, 所作無礙, 事理雙通.³⁴³

However, it appears inaccurate to hold that Li's idea is exactly the same as the above idea and that he propagates Buddhist self-cultivation. It is true that Li absorbs the Buddhist idea that the one who is enlightened about the truth of Emptiness (*kong*) cannot but re-appreciate the world and daily affairs because such discernment as nothingness/thingness, sageness/ordinariness, and principle/things eventually turns out to be empty, and thus irrelevant to one's learning and practice for one's actual and concrete life.³⁴⁴ However, Li Zhi's 'world or worldly affairs' seems to have a different emphasis: Mazu's re-appreciated world and daily affairs are uneventful and peaceful because for Mazu enlightenment is the great affirmation that what is to be achieved is already achieved as what is given to us from the

³⁴³ 3rd paragraph, Ch.2 Shizhong 示衆, *Jiangxi mazu daoyi chanshi yulu* 江西馬祖禪師語錄, *Sijia yulu* 四家語錄 (Ming reprint edition) *juan* 1. (My punctuation) For the above translation, I consulted Bak Yong-Kil 박용길 trans., *Majo eo'rok* 마조 어록, Annotated and commented by Yiriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高, et al., (Seoul: Koryeowon, 1998).

³⁴⁴ Master Seung Sahn's summary may enhance our understanding of this point:

1) Theoretical Zen – 'Form is emptiness; emptiness is form'; 2) Tathagata Zen – 'No form, no emptiness'; 3) Patriarchal Zen – 'Form is form; emptiness is emptiness.'
(Seung Sahn, *The Compass of Zen* (Boston, London: Shambhala, 1997), p. 229.)

One might ask what the difference between a common way of thinking and the way of Patriarchal Zen is. Seung Sahn takes an example of a white cup. When one is asked, 'what is this?' A common answer is, 'It is a cup.' – This is the attachment to name and form. If the answer is, 'It is nothing but nothing' or 'It is the same as me,' it is Theoretical Zen. If the answer is, 'The sky is blue,' it is Tathagata Zen reflecting the universal truth, but it does not express one's "connection or relationship to 'this' situation in 'this' moment." If one lifts the cup and drinks water from it without a verbal answer, it is Patriarchal Zen and can be thought to have concrete 'functions' in one's life. (*Ibid.*, pp. 229-243.) It seems to me that Li Zhi's association of the 'True Emptiness' and daily affairs emphasizes the necessity of uplift from Theoretical and Tathagata Zen to Patriarchal Zen.

beginning, and his “walking, staying, sitting, and lying down” is basically a symbolic description of the spontaneous actions of the enlightened, whereas Li’s re-appreciated world and daily affairs do not seem to be uneventful and peaceful and his “wearing clothing, eating food, and excretion” more realistically describes the concrete actions of common people.³⁴⁵ The True Emptiness of Li Zhi calls learners to refocus on the real world and to empty their minds of any one-dimensional attachment to meta-physicality or physicality. Learners of True Emptiness do not regard the world and daily matters as having constant substance, nor do they ignore them; although they think that everything is empty and transient, they also know that to turn a blind eye on the world and daily matters is also nothing but attachment to emptiness (nothingness). Thus, learners of True Emptiness can critically accept the existence of both good and bad as they are and actively engage in the world and daily matters without attachment, which guarantees ‘simplicity and easiness’ in learning and practice. This is why Li Zhi does not simply describe “wearing clothing, eating food, and excretion” as an ideal; rather, such matters must have been a field where Li and his like-mind learners have to strive for the ideal realization of Childlike mind.³⁴⁶ To this effect, Li Zhi’s True Emptiness seems to give way to Confucianism to some extent. This is the nuance of Li Zhi’s True Emptiness.

One might say that Li Zhi appropriates Buddhist idea for his own purpose. However, the point is that Li still retains the core Buddhist value in the sense that learners of True Emptiness cannot but believe in the fundamental unity of all myriad things, and therefore have great compassion about the suffering of all other beings. Again, this turns into a point at which Li Zhi can discuss Confucian moral values (“humanity and righteousness” (*renyi* 仁義)) in

³⁴⁵ Mizoguch Yūzō explains this difference in understanding the notion of ‘daily affairs’ that Chan Buddhism focuses on the self-so-ness (*ziran*) of daily affairs, whereas Li Zhi focuses on the self-so-ness of human beings. (Mizoguch Yūzō, *ibid.*, p. 234)

³⁴⁶ This seems to be supported by Li’s so-called utilitarian and practical disposition, i.e. his affirmative attitude toward merchants, military affairs, and economy. Refer to “You yu Jiao Ruohou” 又與焦弱侯, *FX*, *juan* 2, p. 49; “Bingshi lun” 兵食論 (On military affairs and food), *FX*, *juan* 3, pp. 94-96.

conjunction with True Emptiness, just as Mazu introduces the concept of humanity (*ren*). The humanity in Mazu's context is conferred on sentient beings by Buddha, while the humanity and righteousness in Li's context are expressed from within. Presumably, this difference in direction reflects Li's uniqueness in his use of Buddhist idea. Although the difference may be a matter of expression rather than structural, fundamental difference in thought, the effect brought by the difference can be said to be considerable – Li's liberal yet nuanced use of Buddhist idea made possible his syncretism and non-determinable radicalism, and *vice versa*.

3. *Li Zhi on Daoism*

3-1) *Daoism as the intersection of Buddhism and Confucianism*

Despite the foregoing discussion about Li Zhi's open-mindedness toward other teachings than Confucianism, our discussion would be incomplete without Li Zhi's perspective particularly on Daoism, for it can be the immediate backdrop to his *Laozi jie*. For Li Zhi, Daoism is worth studying and practicing because it provides us with insights into a profound truth. Li Zhi recalled the opportunity to encounter and appreciate the *Laozi* as follows:

- (A) Getting a feeling of fullness after a meal is common to everyone. People in the south eat rice and are satisfied with it; people in the north eat millet and are satisfied with it. Hence, they have never envied each other. But even if they were made to switch their places and eat each other's food, they would not throw it away. The Way of Confucius and that of Laozi are just as rice in the south and millet in the north. Although we don't envy others their food if we are satisfied with our province, we don't have to throw away each other's food! How come it is possible? It is because if people are really full, they are satisfied with it; if they are really hungry, they have no option [but to eat any food given].

食之於飽，一也。南人食稻而甘，北人食黍而甘，此一南一北者未始相羨也。然使兩人者易地而食焉，則又未始相棄也。道之於孔老，猶稻黍之於南北也，足乎此者，雖無羨於彼，而顧可棄之哉！何也？至飽者各足，而真飢者無擇也。

(Ep) When I studied in the northern province before, I once ate a meal in the house of the owner [of my residence]. At the time, it was freezingly cold; it rained and snowed for three days so that I could not find food for seven days, and I writhed with famine and cold. Eventually, I visited the owner in the hope that he might help me. Since he sympathized with me, he boiled millet for me. I devoured it with my mouth open and had no time to think. After the meal, I asked him, “It must have been [cooked] rice, mustn’t it? How come it was so tasty?” He told me smilingly, “It was millet and looked similar to rice. The millet [that you have just eaten] now is not different from the millet [that you had eaten in the past]. Just because you were hungry indeed, you felt [the millet] as really tasty; as you felt it as really tasty, you were satisfied [with it] indeed. Don’t think whether it is rice or not, and don’t think whether it is millet or not from now on. (Just eat and enjoy what you eat)” After I heard his words, I said to myself with deep emotion, “If my attitude toward *Dao* is the same as my present pursuit of food, I will have no room to distinguish Confucius and Laozi!”

蓋嘗北學而食於主人之家矣。天寒，大雨雪三日，絕糧七日，饑凍困踣，望主人而向往焉。主人憐我，炊黍餉我，信口大嚼，未暇辨也。撤案而後問曰，“豈稻粱也歟！奚其有此美也？”主人笑曰，“此黍稷也，與稻粱埒。且今之黍稷也，非有異於向之黍稷者也。惟甚飢，故甚美；惟甚美，故甚飽。子今以往，不作稻粱想，不作黍稷想矣。”余聞之，慨然而歎，使余之於道若今之望食，則孔老暇擇乎！

(B) I have seriously studied the *Laozi* since then, and read the *Laozi jie* of Su Ziyou. There were many people who commented on the *Laozi*, but Su Ziyou deserves to be called the best among them. Ziyou quoted from the *Zhongyong* and said, “It is called ‘equilibrium’ (*zhong* 中) that joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure are not yet manifested (*weifafa* 未發).” Generally, the equilibrium before emotions’ manifestation is the kernel of all myriad things. Each and every Song Neo-Confucian since Master Mingdao handed [the teaching of *weifafa*] down and let their students see how the state [of *weifafa*] is. Only he, Ziyou could understand the subtle words from the simple remainder [of an ancient scripture], thereby justly interpreting and effectively showing the essence of the *Laozi*. Since the five thousands words of the *Laozi* become crystal-clear [to us thanks to Ziyou’s commentary], learners should not skip reading them even a single day by all means. When Ziyou’s *Laozi jie* was completed, the book was shown to a Buddhist Monk, Daoquan 道全 [?-?] and he was satisfied with it; when the book was sent to his brother Zizhan 子瞻 [i.e., Su Shi 蘇軾], he was also satisfied with it. Now it has been more than five hundreds years since Ziyou died, but I have come across this unusual book of him. Ah, only when we are genuinely hungry for something can we get it indeed!

自此專治老子，而時獲子由老子解讀之。解老子者眾矣，而子由稱最。子由之引中庸曰，“喜怒哀樂之未發謂之中。”夫未發之中，萬物之奧，宋儒自明道以後，遞相傳授，每令門弟子看其氣象為何如者也。子由乃獨得微言於殘篇斷簡之中宜其善發老子之蘊，使五千餘言爛然如皎日，學者斷斷乎不可以一日去手也。解成，示道全，當道全意；寄子瞻，又當子瞻意。今去子由五百餘年，不意復見此奇特。嗟夫！亦惟真饑而後能得之也。^{347 348}

³⁴⁷ “Ziyou laozi jie xu” 子由解老序 (Preface to the *Laozi jie* of Su Zhe), *Zashu*, *FS*, *juan* 3, pp. 110-111.

³⁴⁸ It is impossible to examine whether or not the above episode is real although the backdrop of the episode seems to correspond to his career to some extent. This preface was written in 1574, and Li held an office in the Ministry of Rites in Beijing in 1566-70, which milieu may

Of particular interests are the words, “hunger” ((A) and (Ep)) and “the not-yet-manifested state” (*weifa*) (B). A genuine hunger makes people receptive to any kind of food; whether it is rice or millet does not matter to really hungry people. In other words, true hunger help discard our acquired proclivity or prejudice, which is rather a culturally imposed mind-set than spontaneous nature. Accordingly, physical hunger can be followed by the emptiness of the heart-mind and resumption of nature. This reminds us of the *Laozi* Ch. 12, “Accordingly, the sage seeks to satisfy the stomach, not the eyes” (是以聖人爲腹, 不爲目). Now it seems clear that Li Zhi and Laozi tried to deal with the problem of nature or heart-mind by using a physical metaphor – hunger. In doing so, Li draws the conclusion that Confucius and Laozi do not have to be distinguished insofar as they provide insights into nature and heart-mind, namely, self-cultivation based on the truth of *Dao*.

Subsequently, Li moves on to the initial purpose of his writing, to introduce Su Zhe’s *Laozi jie*, whose title would be used also for Li’s commentary on the *Laozi*. Li Zhi holds that Su Zhe’s commentary is excellent because the essence of the *Laozi* is illuminated through the concept of “*weifa*” from the *Zhongyong*. But it seems difficult to understand why Su Zhe used the concept of “*weifa*” and Li Zhi praises Su Zhe for that reason. Thus, we need to take a look at Su’s preface, from which Li cites the passage:

When I was forty-two years old, I stayed in the Junzhou 筠州. Although it was a small prefecture, there were many old temples for Chan Buddhism, and so many roaming monks gathered there. Among them, there was a monk called Daoquan 道全, who is a grandson of the duke Nan 南. His behavior was noble and he had a cleaver mind, and so I liked to talk with him about *Dao*. I told him, “What you’re talking about is that which I already learned in Confucian scriptures.” He said, “They’re all Buddhist teachings. How could you, a Confucian, get it by yourself (*zide* 自得)?” I said, “No, now you despicably ask me what kind of teaching Confucianism does not have, making a false charge. In my opinion, Confucianism has such teachings indeed, but

be the backdrop. During his stay in Beijing, Li met such like-minded colleagues as Xu Yongjian 徐用檢, who introduced Yangming xue, Buddhism, and Daoism to Li Zhi. See Xu Jianping, *Lizhi sixiang yanbian shi* 李贄思想演變史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshi, 2005), p. 154 and Li Zhi, “houyu” 後語, *Yangming xiansheng nianpu*; *ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

the world is not aware of it. How are you sure that Confucianism is not compatible with Buddhism just as Chinese do not get along with other races?” Daoquan replied, “Please, briefly explain the point of your idea to me.”

予年四十有二,請居筠州。筠雖小州,而多古禪刹,四方遊僧聚焉。有道全者,住黃蘗山,南公之孫也,行高而心通,喜從予遊,嘗與予談道。予告之曰,“子所談者,予於儒書已得之矣。”全曰,“此佛法也,儒者何自得之?”予曰,“不然,子忝問道,‘儒者之所無何若?’強以誣之。顧誠有之,而世莫知耳。儒佛之不相通,如胡、漢之不相諳也,子亦何由知之?”全曰,“試為我言其略。”

[Expl.1] I said, “There was Zisi 子思, a grandson of Confucius. The book written by Zisi is the *Zhongyong*, in which he says, ‘It is called equilibrium (*zhong*), [the state] in which joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure are not yet manifested (*weifā*), and it is called ‘harmony’ (*he* 和) [the state in] which all emotions are appropriate and moderate after they are manifested. *Zhong* (equilibrium) is the great root of the world; *he* (harmony) is the universal Way of the world. When *zhong* and *he* are maximized, heaven and earth are properly established and all myriad things are well nurtured.’ If this is not a Buddhist teaching, what else is this? But I think that only *loci classici*, from which each teaching is derived, are different.” “What is each of them derived from?” Daoquan asked.

予曰,“孔子之孫子思,子思之書曰中庸,中庸之言曰,‘喜怒哀樂之未發,謂之中,發而皆中節,謂之和。’中也者,天下之大本也;和也者,天下之達道也。致中和,天地位焉,萬物育焉。’此非佛法而何?顧所從言之異也。”全曰,“何以言之?”

[Expl.2] “The sixth patriarch, Huineng 惠能 said, ‘What will be your original face (self) at the very moment when you think *neither good nor evil*?’³⁴⁹ Since the sixth patriarch [taught it], many people have been enlightened on the truth by virtue of his teaching. This mind to think *neither good nor evil* refers to the state in which joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure are not yet manifested. Generally, [this state of] *zhong* is another name of Buddha nature (*foxing* 佛性), and the state of *he* (harmony) can be regarded as a general category covering the six practices for enlightenment (*du* 度; *pāramitā*; cross over; practices to cross over from this shore to that shore of enlightenment: generosity, precepts, perseverance, effort, meditation, and wisdom). If my understanding is not [compatible with] Buddhist teaching, what can be compatible with it?” Daoquan was surprised and delighted at my words, saying, “I did not know it originally, but just now I have come to know both Confucianism and Buddhism.”

I smiled and said, “Not yet [clear enough]. [You have to know that] there are no two *Dao* in the world, but [practical] means to rule people by are various (different). There should be propriety in the relationship between kings and their subordinates, fathers and their sons; otherwise, there will be turmoil. However, if one knows propriety only yet does not know [the profound] *Dao*, one would be just a worldly Confucian, and thereby not enough to regard him as noble. . . Sages of old regarded their practice as desirable when they could practice [the celestial] *Dao* at heart yet did not destroy the [earthly] world.” “This is an exquisite talk,” Daoquan politely said. From then, I had begun to comment on the *Laozi*. Whenever I commented on each chapter, I showed it

³⁴⁹ Refer to *Liuzu dashi fabao tanjing* 六祖大師法寶壇經, Ch.(pin 品)1 (T.2008:349b24-5); *Changzong Wumenguan* 禪宗無門關, Case.(ze 則) 23 (T.2005:295c26-7) For the English translations, see Katsuki Sekida, *The Gateless Gate, Two Zen Classics – Mumonkan and Hekiganrok* (NY,Tokyo: Waterhill, 1977), p. 23.

to him. Every time he said with acclamations, “All are [compatible with] Buddhist teachings!”...

予曰,“六祖有言,不思善,不思惡,方是時也,孰是汝本來面目?自六祖以來,人以此言悟入者太半矣.所謂不思善,不思惡,則喜怒哀樂之未發也.蓋中者,佛性之異名;而和者,六度萬行之總目也.致中極和而天地萬物生於其間,此非佛法,何以當之?”全驚喜曰,“吾初不知也,今而後始知儒佛也.”予笑曰,“不然,天下固無二道,而所以治人則異.君臣父子之間,非禮法則亂,知禮法而不知道,則世之俗儒,不足貴也...古之聖人,中心行道,而不毀世法,然後可耳.”全作禮曰,“此至論也.”是時予方解老子,每出章,輒以示全,全輒歎曰,“皆佛說也.”³⁵⁰

Su Zhe explains the passage from the *Zhongyong* in order to argue that Confucianism and Buddhism are not fundamentally different. ([*Expl.1*]) The point of his explanation appears to be that Confucianism teaches the truth of nature and substance (*zhong*) and self-cultivation and altruistic practices (*he*) just like Buddhism. This is more concretely shown in the latter part of [*Expl.2*], and should be the reason why Li Zhi praises such a comparison although Su Zhe’s syncretism does not slough off the traditional logic of function allocation for each teaching compared to Li’s radical amalgamation of the three teachings.

However, [*Expl.2*] deserves further attention. Su compares “a mind to think neither good nor evil (the original face or self)” to the state of “*weifa*,” and thereby identifies “Buddha-nature” (*foxing*) with “equilibrium” (*zhong*). Simply put, the true (original) self as the tranquil heart-mind of neither good nor evil, i.e., Buddha-nature is associated with the equilibrium of the not-yet-manifested mind, i.e., nature (*xing*). Consequently, Su’s subsequent statement about his commenting of the *Laozi* should be deemed to be initiated by such association. In other words, the original state of the heart-mind or *xing* is tantamount to *Dao*, the realm of *wuwei* and *ziran*; therefore, the original state of *xing*, like *Dao*, does not have room for ethical judgment (“neither good nor evil” and “equilibrium”; trans-ethical) yet enable the ethical effect of “harmony” (*he*). Su Zhe and Li Zhi must have thought that the *Laozi* was a

³⁵⁰ Su Zhe 蘇轍, *Daode zhen jing zhu* 道德真經注, **ZD** 12:321c-322a; “Ti Laozi Daode jing hou 題老子道德經後 (Epilogue to the *Commentary on the Laozi*),” in Zeng Zaozhuang 曾枣庄 et al. ed., *San su quanshu* 三蘇全書 (Beijing: Yuwen chubanshu, 2001), volume 5, pp. 482-483.

good philosophical source on which to think about this paradoxical crux of Neo-Confucianism, i.e., trans-ethicality of *xing*. In fact, this issue must have been of critical importance to Li Zhi because it relates to the essential teaching of Wang Yangming, namely, “innate knowing” (*liangzhi* 良知) and the “Four Maxims” (*siju jiao* 四句教) from which the branch schools of Yangming xue ensued. Yangming too compared the “original face” to the “equilibrium (*zhong*) of the state of *weifa*,” which is none other than “innate knowing”:

- i) The equilibrium before emotions’ manifestation (*weifa zhi zhong*) is the innate knowing.
未發之中即良知也. (ZXL 157)
- ii) To recognize one’s original face (state, countenance) at the moment of thinking of neither good nor evil is Buddha’s (Buddhism) expedient means by which to inculcate [his idea] on those who have not recognized their original faces yet. The original face is what our sagely school (Confucianism) calls ‘innate knowledge.’
“不思善不思惡時認本來面目,” 此佛氏為未識本來面目者設此方便. “本來面目”即吾聖門所謂“良知.” (ZXL 162)

And Yangming defines innate knowing as the original state of heart-mind (*xin zhi bentu* 心之本體), which is *xing*, and describes it as neither good nor evil:

- a) The innate knowing is the original state (*ti*: body, substance) of heart-mind, which is that which, I earlier called, always reflects [things like a mirror].
良知者, 心之本體, 即前所謂恆照者也. (ZXL 152)
- b) The original state of heart-mind is nature (*xing*), and nature is *li* (*Dao*)
心之本體, 即是性. 性即是理. (ZXL 82)
- c) *The Four Maxims*
 1. Being neither good nor evil (*wu-shan wu-e* 無善無惡) characterizes the original state of heart-mind (the mind-in-itself);
 2. Being either good or evil characterizes the movement of its intentions;
 3. Discerning (knowing) good and evil characterizes the innate knowing (*liangzhi*);
 4. Doing good things and discarding evil things characterize the rectification of [one’s heart-mind about] various things (*gewu* 格物³⁵¹).³⁵²

³⁵¹ For Zhu Xi, “*gewu*” means that one ‘investigates things’ so that one can find the principles of various things. On the other hand, Yangming understands *gewu* as regulating one’s heart-mind to bear on various things or rectifying inappropriate affairs which are caused by our ill heart-mind. In fact, it is not clear whether Yangming defines *gewu* as the rectification of one’s heart-mind or that of things (affairs); neither can be excluded from Yangming’s thought because both seem to be interrelated. Refer to Chen Lai, *Youwu zhi jing: Wang yangming zhexue de jingshen* 有無之境：王陽明哲學的精神 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), pp. 156-158.

無善無惡是心之體, 有善有惡是意之動, 知善知惡是良知, 為善去惡是格物. (ZXL 315)

Sum) Master Yangming said that Yan Hui's not giving vent to a wrong person was possible not until he held the equilibrium before emotions' manifestation. But this teaching is a temporary expedient. Generally, the equilibrium before emotions' manifestation is the original state of the Great Void (*taixu* 太虛), and it is present everywhere, filling [the whole universe]; therefore, it does not distinguish inside and outside. The appropriateness (*zhong* 中) and moderation (*jie* 節) after emotions' manifestation is nothing but the equilibrium before emotions' manifestation. If [one thinks that] the equilibrium (*zhong*) is present [as a discrete entity] underneath the appropriateness (*zhong*) and it is the original substance [of the appropriateness], the state of *yifa* (already manifested) and *weifa* would confront each other. This is a dualistic thinking indeed! The innate knowing (*liangzhi*) can recognize both right and wrong (good and evil), but it is originally neither right nor wrong and yet has really the righteous discernment of right from wrong.

先師謂「顏子不遷, 有未發之中始能」此亦權法。夫未發之中是太虛本體, 隨處充滿, 無有內外, 發而中節處即是未發之中。若有在中之中另為本體, 與已發相對, 則誠為二本矣! 良知知是知非, 原是無是無非, 正發真是非之義。³⁵³

The innate knowing or *xing* is neither good nor evil ((c) 1), but it functions as the faculty to discern good from evil ((c) 3). Accordingly, we can infer that Yangming also deals with the paradox of the Neo-Confucian concept of *xing*, i.e., 'trans-ethical and yet ethical,' which has been already discussed in the analysis of Yulgok. As seen in **Sum**), Wang Ji summarizes the whole discussion of Yangming in the above, showing the connection between the state of *weifa*, the innate knowing, and the absence of good and evil. As a sincere student of Yangming and Wang Ji, Li Zhi must have approached Su Zhe's *Laozi jie* and, later, commented on the *Laozi* against the backdrop of the concept of innate knowing and the Four Maxims, which are undeniably redolent of Chan Buddhism.³⁵⁴

Judging from the above, it can be suggested that for Li Zhi the value of Daoist philosophy is drawn from his understanding of (Yangming) Confucianism and Chan

³⁵² The above translation is adapted from Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, p. 149. Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical living*, p. 243.

³⁵³ 3rd "Da Geng Chutong" 答耿楚侗, Shu, *Longxi wang xiansheng quanji* 龍溪王先生全集, *juan* 10.

³⁵⁴ See Julia Ching, *ibid.*, pp. 153-193; Chen Lai, *ibid.*, pp. 218-229.

Buddhism. However, given that Chan Buddhism is already tinged with Daoist color and such later Confucian scriptures as the *Zhongyong* are allegedly under Daoist influence, Su Zhe and Li Zhi's associating the *Laozi* with Buddhism and Confucianism cannot be regarded as just far-fetched. In a sense, Daoist philosophy represented by the *Laozi* needed to be understood as a buffering and intermediary zone, where Buddhism and Confucianism interplay as they transform themselves into whatever version people look for. In the preface to the *Daojiao chao* 道教鈔, or Excerpt from Daoist scriptures,³⁵⁵ Li says:

Generally speaking, if they are Buddhist believers, they know only Buddhism but do not know about Daoism. Daoism regards the lord Lao (Laojun 老君; Laozi) as its founder, whom Confucius asked about propriety earlier. Given Laozi's words for our Confucius, how can any students of any ages not admire and bear his words in mind even for a single moment? If his words are not borne in mind, arrogance, haughtiness, and intemperance will arise, so that trouble will not stop even for a single day. If I quite often have those inveterate problems, and thereby am despised by others frequently though I am [already] old and near to death, how much more does Yang Dingjian, whose physique is superior but his insight is inferior to mine, have to admire [Laozi's teaching] until his death? Although you put the *Laozi* on your desk everyday, [you have to] carry it by the hands to recite it. Besides, such books as the *Wenshi zhen jing* 文始真經 by Guanyinzi 關尹子 and the *Huashu* 化書 by Tanzi 譚子 are all worth carrying. How can they have even a slight difference from Buddha's [teaching]? Accordingly, I aspired to show [such Daoist teaching] to Buddhist believers by compiling this book (*Daojiao chao*) and I wanted to show it to Yang Dingjian indeed. 凡為釋子, 但知佛教而不知道教。夫道家以老君為祖, 孔夫子所嘗問禮者。觀其告吾夫子數語, 千萬世學者可以一時而不佩服於身, 一息而不銘刻於心耶? 若一息不銘刻, 則驕氣作, 態色著, 淫志生, 禍至(止)無日矣。余老且死, 猶時時犯此症候, 幾為人所魚肉, 況如楊生定見者筋骨雖勝余, 識見尤後於余, 而可不切切焉佩以終身歟! 老子[道德經]雖日置案頭, 行則携持入手夾, 以便諷誦。若關尹子之[文始真經]與譚子[化書], 皆宜隨身者, 何曾一毫與釋迦差異也? 故獨編錄之以示釋子之有志向, 而其欲以示楊定見也尤切。³⁵⁶

Of particular interest is that the gap between Buddhism and Confucianism is bridged by Daoism or that Buddhism and Confucianism are fused into Daoism. First of all, Li Zhi draws on the legend of Confucius that Confucius asked Laozi for advice about propriety, and thereby highlights a historical connection between Confucianism and Daoism. To escape the

³⁵⁵ As far as I know, this book is not extant.

³⁵⁶ “*Daojiao chao xiaoyin*” 道教鈔小引 (Preface to the Exception from Daoist scriptures), Xuhui, *XFS*, *juan* 2, p. 66.

charge of arbitrary and far-fetched interpretation, Li clarifies that the main teaching of the *Laozi* is for regulation of self, which is none other than the spirit of propriety. In addition, in describing his failure in self-cultivation with regret, Li seems to allude to the worth of the *Laozi*.³⁵⁷ And then Li straightforwardly asserts that the teaching of Daoist scriptures is practically the same as Buddhism, and therefore Buddhist believers must read them.

From this discussion, we may conclude that Li Zhi's appreciation of Daoism is based on two related concerns. The first concern is that one can ponder on the paradoxical crux of Neo-Confucianism by using the simple but profound philosophical resource of Daoism. The other concern is to read practical ethics from Daoism; that is, Daoist scriptures provide us with a practical insight into self-cultivation (and rulership others as a result).

3-2) *The Laozi jie and related matters*

This section briefly addresses the records and related issues regarding Li Zhi's *Laozi jie*. In a letter to his friend, Jiao Hong, Li describes his situation about writing books:

I am alone without a friend in the mountain [Huangan 黃安], and so I just take and open history books from time to time. It is a happy experience to encounter with historical figures in books, but this doesn't mean that I desire to be erudite... My recent more than ten [articles regarding] interpretation of history (讀史)³⁵⁸ seem to contain pretty brilliant insights. After September on, it has snowed heavily, and I have not read books closely. But by chance I read Su Ziyou's [i.e., Su Zhe] *Laozi jie* 老子解, coming to know that he was not so profound in understanding the *Laozi* and that this *Laozi* was not easy to understand indeed. I have written the *Jielao* 解老 [i.e., the *Laozi jie*] by blowing on frozen ink, and the book had been completed in seven days. I think this is better than any others. However, I don't have leisure time to copy it [by hand]. How about coping and proffering it to you, asking for your feedback when spring comes and it becomes warm so as to melt snow and ice?

³⁵⁷ Li's adoring attitude toward *Laozi* is well shown in a poem:

Although the white-headed *Laozi* did not seek for fame;
The thousands words in the *Daode jing* have been praised for all ages.
Today if I really talk about my gain and loss;
This person is already nothing but a floating weed.
(5th poem, "Yonggu wushou" 詠古五首, Shihui, *XFS*, juan 5, p. 115.)

白頭老子不求名;
道德千言萬古稱。
今日若論真得失;
此身曾是一流萍。

³⁵⁸ In the *Fenshu*, there is a chapter named "*dushi* 讀史." (*FS*, juan 5.)

山中寂寞無侶，時時取史冊披閱，得與其人會覩，亦自快樂，非謂有志于博學宏詞科也...近有讀史數十篇，頗多發明。入九以後，雪深數尺，不復親近冊子，偶一閱子由老子解，乃知此君非深老子者，此老蓋真未易知也。呵凍作解老一卷，七日而成帙，自謂莫逾，今亦未暇錄去，待春暖凍解，抄出呈上取證何如？³⁵⁹

Jiao Hong included in the *Wings for the Laozi readers*, or *Laozi yi* 老子翼, Li Zhi's *Laozi jie* (*jielao*) as well as Li's preface to Su Zhe's *Laozi jie*. Thus, the above letter is likely to correspond to the available record in the *Laozi yi*, regarding Li Zhi's *Laozi jie* (*jielao*); if this is the case, the above letter and Li's *Laozi jie* must have been written in 1575, as Jiao Hong records.³⁶⁰ However, the problem is, according to Xu Jianping, there is an error in Jiao Hong's record about the year of Li's *Laozi jie*; it was undoubtedly 1574 when Jiao Hong received Li's preface to and edition of Su Zhe's *Laozi jie*, but Jiao recorded that Li Zhi wrote his own commentary on the *Laozi* in the next year, e.g., 1575,³⁶¹ which does not correspond to the above letter because Li Zhi could not have had time to spend in the mountain until he resigned from office in 1580.³⁶² Hence, it should be 1581 when Li wrote the *Laozi jie* and started preparing for the *Book to be hidden*, or *Zangshu* 藏書.

Apart from the historical matter, the above letter is concerned with another issue; that is, Li Zhi eventually tried to surpass Su Zhe's understanding of the *Laozi*, and his commentary was formed in conjunction with his reading of history. This is to be discussed later in the analysis of Li's *Laozi jie*. Before we move on to the analysis of the *Laozi jie*, it needs to be mentioned that the *Laozi jie* was written loosely over the same period of time with the *Commentary on the Zhuangzi* (*Zhuangzi jie* 莊子解, 1582) and the *Main thrust of the Heart-Sutra* (*Xinjing tigang* 心經提綱, 1578).³⁶³ Moreover, Li Zhi once mentioned these three

³⁵⁹ “Yu Jiao Ruohou” 與焦弱侯, Shuhui, *XFS*, *juan* 1, p. 41.

³⁶⁰ Appendix, *Laozi yi*, *juan* 6, p. 15.

³⁶¹ Appendix, *Laozi yi*, *juan* 6, p. 15.

³⁶² Xu Jianping, *ibid.*, pp. 150-165.

³⁶³ Refer to Xu Jianping, *ibid.*

works altogether.³⁶⁴ This suggests that the three works are interrelated. In fact, Li's understanding of the *Heart-Sutra* and the *Zhuangzi* deeply influences his interpretation of the *Laozi*. Although in principle, the interrelatedness of Li's commentaries has to be discussed in the analysis of the contents, there is an issue that needs to be addressed. In an edition of the *Laozi jie*, Li's *Main thrust of the Heart-Sutra* is put together,³⁶⁵ which for me does not seem to be a mistake at all; the editor seems to categorize both works into the same group. The editor's choice will turn out to be relevant to our understanding of the *Laozi jie*, as will be discussed in the next chapter. One might doubt the influence of Li's reading of the *Zhuangzi* on his commentary on the *Laozi* because his work on the *Zhuangzi* was completed one year later than the *Laozi jie*. Presumably, this was possible because Li Zhi must have read the *Zhuangzi* over a long period of time even before he wrote the commentary on it, and for him the *Zhuangzi* and the *Laozi* are similar in thought.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ “Da Jiao Yiyuan” 答焦漪園, Shuda, *FS*, *juan* 1, p. 9.

³⁶⁵ Hong Liangxun 洪良巡 ed., Li Zhi comment., *Daode jing jie* 道德經解 (*Laozi jie*), *Zangwai Daoshu* 藏外道書, compiled by Li Yimang 李一氓, (Sichuan: Bashu shushe, 1992) Book.(ce) 1:645a-669b. See 647a-648a. The original text of the *Daode jing jie* will be quoted from this edition, and *Lizhi wenji* volume. 7 has been consulted for punctuation.

³⁶⁶ When he completed the *Zhuangzi jie*, he made a remark as follows:

If the *Zhuangzi* does not have the inner seven chapters, then the outer and syncretic chapters would not be hindered to be understood as praiseworthy [as if they were Zhuangzi's works]. Alas, because there are the inner seven chapters, I cut off the outer and syncretic chapters, regarding them as additional comments and opinions by the Qin and Han Daoists. Thus I have commented on the inner seven chapters only and wish the future sages to correct it together with my commentary on the *Laozi*. 南華經若無內七篇, 則外篇、雜篇固不妨奇特也。惜哉, 以有內七篇也, 故余斷以外篇、雜篇為秦、漢見道人口吻, 而讀注內七篇, 使與道德經注解并請正於後聖云。
(“Du nanhua” 讀南華, Zazhu, *XFS*, *juan* 4, p. 101.)

V. Li Zhi on the *Laozi*:

True Emptiness, Heart-mind, and Oneness of All things

1. *The Way and True Emptiness*

As discussed in the previous chapter, Li Zhi understands Daoism as basically sharing the same import with Buddhism or as the intersection between Buddhism and Confucianism. Thus, our analysis of Li's interpretation of the *Laozi* calls for a basic understanding of how Li Zhi commands Buddhist and Confucian concepts. In this section, it is argued that his understanding of *Dao* in the *Laozi* relates closely to his understanding of True Emptiness in Chan (Zen) Buddhism. And it will turn out that his understanding of *Dao*, being, and non-being is closely connected with the concept of the heart-mind, which will be discussed in the next section.

1-1) *Being and Non-Being: Dao as non-Dao?*

A. *The Constant Dao vs. Effable Dao*

Li Zhi's commentary on the *Laozi* Ch. 1 is of critical importance because it orients the rest of the *Laozi jie* (hereafter **LZJ**):

1-[1] *The Dao that is speakable is not the Constant Dao; 1-[2] the name that is nameable is not the Constant Name. 1-[3] Namelessness is the origin of Heaven-and-Earth; names' coming into being is the mother (genesis) of all myriad things. 1-[4] Hence, we desire to observe the subtlety by [understanding] the Constant Non-being; we desire to observe the borders [among things] by [understanding] the Constant Being. 1-[5] These two things come out from the same [source], but they have different names. "The same [source]" is called "profundity." It is profound and profound indeed. It is the gate of all subtleties.*^{367*}

³⁶⁷ My translation of the *Laozi* appeared in the *Laozi jie* is based on Li Zhi's understanding. Since Li Zhi's received text of the *Laozi* is the same as Su Zhe's text and Li's commentaries is, to some extent, under Su's influence, I consulted Su Zhe's understanding of the *Laozi* as well, whenever needed. And because Su's received text is from Heshang gong, Heshang gong's *Laozi* was also consulted. For English translation of the *Laozi*, I consulted the aforementioned English translations in the chapters for Yulgok, which includes Alan Chan, *ibid.*; Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, etc.

* The punctuations in **1-[2]** and **1-[4]** are based on Li Zhi's commentary. In the case of "the Constant Non-Being (*changwu*)" and "the Constant Being (*changyou*)," my punctuation is based on Su Zhe's text as well as Li Zhi's commentary ("the Ultimate Non-Being" (*zhiwu*)

道可道非常道，名可名非常名。無名，天地之始，有名，萬物之母。故常無欲以觀其妙，常有欲以觀其徼。此兩者同出，而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。

1-[1] The Constant *Dao* (*changdao* 常道) is that which is unknown and is its own source. [If it is] the Constant *Dao*, it cannot be spoken of by people. If we discard what cannot certainly be spoken of, but certainly speak of what can be spoken of, it is the effable *Dao* (*kedao* 可道) and not the Constant *Dao*.

不知而自由之者，常道也。常道，則人不道之矣。舍其所不必道，而必道其所可道，是可道也，非常道也。

1-[2] The Constant Name (*changming* 常名) is that which is its own distinctive name when [it is] generated. [If it is] the Constant Name, it cannot be conferred by people. If we discard what cannot certainly be named, but certainly give a name to what is namable, it is the nameable name (*keming* 可名) and not the Constant name.

有生而自別名者，常名也，常名則人不名之矣。舍其所不必名，而必名其所可名，是可名也，非常名也。

1-[3] Thus, the Constant Name originates from Namelessness (*wuming* 無名). And, generally speaking, after Heaven-and-Earth came into being, names were brought into being; after Heaven-and-Earth came into being, all myriad things came to exist. All myriad things are generated and generated again, and the changes and transformation are inexhaustible. Therefore, if one understands the [truth of] “Namelessness,” one can see the wondrousness [of the universe]; if one understands the [truth of] “names,” one can see the borders (*jiao* 徼)³⁶⁸ [in the world].

然是常名也，始於無名。及夫有天地而後名生焉，有天地而後有萬物，萬物生生而變化無窮矣。故知其無名，則可以觀妙矣；知其有名，則可以觀徼矣。

1-[4] Only the Ultimate Non-being (*zhiwu* 至無) is what can be the Ultimate Being (*zhियou* 至有); only the Ultimate Constancy (*zhichang* 至常) is what can be the Ultimate Subtlety (*zhimiao* 至妙). Generally speaking, if one can discourse on *Dao* and penetrate being and non-being, [one’s understanding of *Dao*] is at the Ultimate (exquisite) [level].

惟其至無，乃所以爲至有；惟其至常，乃所以爲至妙(妙)也。夫語道而通於有無，至矣。

1-[5] However, people who follow the images [of things] are attached to [the notion] of being; people who build [their idea] on the concept of “Emptiness” (*kong* 空; *Śūnyata*) [tend to] linger on [the notion of] non-being; accordingly, [for them] there are many things speakable and namable. [However, people] do not know [the truth] that although being and non-being are different in name (expression), the generations of

and “the Ultimate Being” (*zhियou*)). Thus the punctuation of 1-[4] is different from that of Heshang gong text.

³⁶⁸ Jiao Hong ed., *Laozi yi* Ch.1, p. 1. Jiao Hong explains “*jiao*” as “the hole from which things are originated” (*wusuo chu zhi kongqiao* 物所出之孔竅), “borders” (*bianji* 邊際), and “belonging” (*gui* 歸). Given that Li Zhi connects *jiao* with “names,” we can connect Jiao Hong’s etymological explanation on *jiao* with the notion of ‘names’; the generation of names can mean that our thinking faculty differentiates various things, thereby drawing borders between things or allotting to them where they belong. To this effect, *jiao* can be translated as the “borders” between things, which metaphorically mean the differentiation of things in language (name).

being and non-being are the same indeed. If [we can] nullify non-being, how [much more easily can we nullify] the profundity? [Thus, it has to be said that] it is profound and yet not profound. Then how [easily can we nullify] the deeper profundity? [If this is the case,] who would believe that this is what the Constant Name and the Constant *Dao* originate from and the Constant Non-being and Constant Being are named [as such] by? (My paragraphing and numbering)³⁶⁹

然徇象者執有，蘊空者滯無，而可道可名者衆矣。不知有無之名雖異，有無之出實同。無亦無之，何其玄也；玄又無玄，何其又玄也。而孰信其爲常名常道之所自出，常無常有之所由名者哉！(LZJ Ch. 1)

Of particular interest is the term of “*kedao* 可道” (1-[1]). Since “*kedao*” is usually interpreted as “being able to speak of or describable in language,”³⁷⁰ “*kedao*” in Li Zhi’s commentary can be translated as being speakable. However, based on Li Zhi’s parallelism between *chang-dao* and *ke-dao*, we may also understand “*kedao*” as a noun – an effable *Dao*, which is not the Constant *Dao* (*fei-chang-dao*) and yet a provisional mode of *Dao*,³⁷¹ to borrow Cheng Ju 程俱 and Wang Pang’s 王雱 phrase, Li Zhi’s “effable *Dao*” (*kedao*) is “*Dao* that can be spoken of” (*kedao zhi dao* 可道之道).³⁷² According to Cheng Ju, effable *Dao* is

³⁶⁹ Li Zhi usually does not divide and allocate his commentaries to each phrase and sentence. However, for the convenience of readers and my discussion, I divide his commentaries and allocate them to each part in question. This may go against the import of Li’s editing style which seems to focus more on the explanation of the whole meaning of each chapter. To avoid any distortion of the original meaning, in my analysis, I will emphasize the seamless connection between divided commentaries.

³⁷⁰ Gao Heng 高亨, *Laozi zhenggu* 老子正詁 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1998), Originally published in 1943, p. 1, “*keshuo* 可說.”

³⁷¹ Given that Li Zhi uses a grammatical juxtaposition, “...*chang-dao-ye*...*shi-kedao-ye*, *fei-changdao-ye* ...常道也...是可道也, 非常道也,” “*kedao*” should be tantamount to a noun form. There is an interesting example regarding this. The *Laozi* text A (*jiaben* 甲本) of the Mawangdui silk script (*boshu* 帛書) reads, “*Dao, kedao-ye, fei-hengdao-ye* 道, 可道也, 非恆道也,” which is translated as “As for the Way, the Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way” or “Way-making (*Dao*) that can be put into words is not really way-making.” Refer to Robert G. Henricks, *Lao-tze: Te-tao ching – a new translation based on the recently discovered Ma-wang-tui texts* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), p. 188; Roger T. Ames and David Hall, *Daodejing “Making This Life Significant” – A philosophical translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), p. 77.

³⁷² Jiao Hong ed., *Laozi yi* Ch.1, p. 1 and 3; *Ji wangpang laozi zhu* 輯王雱老子注, compiled by Yin Zhihua 尹志華, *ibid.*, p. 259. Wang Bi used the same term, “*kedao zhi dao*” too, but the nuance is different; Wang focuses on the negative meaning, i.e., ‘An effable *Dao* is not the Constant *Dao*; therefore, it is not worth pursuing.’

that by which people establish social institutions, revealing the provisional modes of the Constant *Dao*. Wang Pang also interprets “effable *Dao*” as timely action that reflects the constant movement of *Dao* and shows a provisional mode of *Dao*.³⁷³ By this token, Li Zhi’s effable *Dao* should be understood to relate to social norms, institutions, and human actions, which cannot but be regarded as practically indispensable to human life, albeit not constant. This positive understanding of “*kedao*” can be traced back to Su Zhe’s commentary from which Li Zhi first learned the philosophy of Laozi:

It (non-constant *Dao*) is not non-*Dao*. However, what is effable cannot be constant; only when it is ineffable, can it be constant. Now, generally speaking, humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are that which can be regarded as what are effable regarding *Dao*. But humanity cannot be regarded as righteousness; nor can propriety be regarded as wisdom – this is the ‘non-constancy’ of such effable *Dao*. Only if it is what is ineffable, then it can be humanity when it is discussed in terms of humanity; righteousness when it is discussed in terms of righteousness; propriety when it is discussed in terms of propriety; wisdom when it is discussed in terms of wisdom. Each of them is not constant, but *Dao* is constantly not changeable. This is why what is ineffable can be constant in such a way.

莫非道也。而可道者不可常，惟不可道，而後可常耳。今夫仁義禮智，此道之可道者也。然而仁不可以為義，而禮不可以為智，可道之不可常如此。惟不可道，然後在仁為仁，在義為義，在禮為禮，在智為智。彼皆不常，而道常不變，不可道之能常如此。³⁷⁴

Although Su Zhe lays more emphasis on the Constant *Dao*, he still gives latitude to what is effable (“*not non-Dao*”). Lü Jifu 呂吉甫 also says “The *Dao* in the world is what is speakable; nevertheless, it is not non-*Dao*.”³⁷⁵ Su Zhe’s including of social norms (humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom) as part of *Dao* and Lü Jifu’s positive understanding of what is speakable seem to have been influential among Ming scholars, to some extent; Jiao Hong, one of the closest friends of Li Zhi, introduced the above understanding by Su Zhe and Lü Jifu in his *Laozi yi*, and the *Laozi huowen* 老子或問 (“Questions and answers about the

³⁷³ Jiao Hong, *ibid.*; *Ji wangpang laozi zhu*, *ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Su Zhe, *Daode zhen jing zhu*, **ZD** 12:291c; *San su quanshu*, volume. 5, p. 401; *Laozi yi*, *juan* 1, p. 2.

³⁷⁵ Jiao Hong, *ibid.*, p. 2, “凡天下之道，其可道者，莫非道也。”

Laozi”) written by Gong Xiumo 龔修默 (?-1619, *Jinling mo jushi* 晉陵默居士), a contemporary of Li Zhi adopts this sort of positive explanation on “*kedao*.”³⁷⁶

Likewise, judging from the parallelism between *chang-ming* and *ke-ming* in Li’s commentary on 1-[2],³⁷⁷ “*keming*” can be translated as “nameable names,” which is usually taken to mean “being able to give a name or namable.”³⁷⁸ Thus, Li Zhi’s “*keming*” is understood as “nameable names” (*keming zhi ming* 可名之名) in the words of Cheng Ju.³⁷⁹ The meaning of “nameable names” should refer to linguistically expressed *Dao* or things.

In affirming social norms and institutions as sub-modes of *Dao*, one can justify society and history in the name of *Dao*. In other words, in recognizing the existing social norms and institutions as part of *Dao*, one can avoid a dualistic worldview that regards society and morality as degenerate forms of *Dao*. Further, one can accept the ultimate legitimacy of constant change in human society; in other words, even radical social reforms and changes can be considered to be an effable *Dao*, behind which the constant movement of the ineffable or constant *Dao* exists. This can fit in the general notion of *Dao* (*li*) in Neo-Confucianism, namely, *Dao*’s ultimate mastership over society and history as well as natural world. It may be said that instead of rendering the established norms an unchangeable authority, Li seems to make room for changes although the current established norms cannot but be accepted in practice.

³⁷⁶ Ch.1, *Laozi huowen* (Ming *jishuiluodong* 吉水羅棟 edition) *Zhongguo zixue mingzhu jicheng* 中國子學明著集成 049, pp. 304-305. Notable is that a famous Yangming scholar, Wang Shihuai 王時槐 (1522-1593, styled tangnan 塘南) attached his preface to this book.

³⁷⁷ “...*chang-ming-ye*...*shi-keming-ye*, *fei-changming-ye* ...常名也...是可名也, 非常名也.”

³⁷⁸ Gao Heng, *Laozi zhenggu*, p. 1. “*keming* 可命.” Cf. *ming* 命 = *mingming* 命名.

³⁷⁹ Jiao Hong, *ibid.*, p. 1 and 3. In the *Laozi* text A of the Mawangdui silk script reads as “*Ming, keming-ye, fei-hengming-ye* 名, 可名也, 非恆名也,” which is translated as “As for names, the name that can be spoken of is not the constant name” Refer to Robert G. Henricks, *ibid.*, p. 188.

B. *Dao* as both Being and Non-Being

Generally speaking, the effable *Dao* and nameable names relate to *you* (being) as the phenomenal world in contrast to *wu* (non-being) as the noumenal world. Thus, in order to find the philosophical basis of Li Zhi's positive understanding of the effable *Dao* and nameable names, we need to take a look at his interpenetration of the concepts of being and non-being. Moreover, Li Zhi says, "If one can discourse on *Dao* and penetrate being and non-being, one's understanding of *Dao* is at the Ultimate (exquisite) level." (1-[4]) Accordingly, Li Zhi's interpretation of being and non-being should collaborate with his understanding of the constant, ineffable *Dao* and the effable *Dao*. If for Li Zhi being and non-being do not constitute a dualistic but an interpenetrative or complementary relationship, his understanding of being and non-being can be understood to support his understanding of the effable *Dao*. However, Li Zhi often seems to use the usual language that explains being as phenomena and non-being as noumenon, which may support a dualistic worldview:

Vacuity (*xu* 虛; non-being) is the constant [characteristic] of *Dao*; stillness is the root (fundamental) [feature] of *Dao* ... Hence, it is intelligible that all things come into being from non-being. And if one can understand that although all things come into being through activity they will in the end return to the root and become still, then one can understand that all things vanish into non-being from being. Generally, stillness is that which one's destiny heads for (returns to) and that from which the constant *Dao* originates...

虛者，道之常；靜者，道之根。... 則凡物之自無而有者，可知也。又能知夫藝藝而生者，仍復歸根而靜，則凡物之自有而無者，可知也。蓋靜者命之所以復，而常道之所自出也... (LZJ Ch. 16)

Does this suggest that Li Zhi attaches priority to non-being and thus builds a dualistic relationship between being and non-being? This requires careful explanation. In relation to this, in (1-[3]), Li seems to be saying that Heaven-and-Earth and all myriad things originate and develop from *Dao* as the pristine "nameless" (*wuming*) state, or non-being. If this is the only meaning of non-being in Li Zhi's commentary, the relationship between non-being and being should be a dualistic relationship that is reducible to a linear, causal model. However, 1-[4] and 1-[5] suggest that Li Zhi does not explain the process of cosmic generation in terms of such a

model, i.e., from the primal non-being to beings. Rather, he requires readers to comprehend *Dao* and all things as the interplay of being and non-being. In other words, even *Dao* is dissolved into the concept of being/non-being. For Li Zhi the relationship between being and non-being is, by nature, more complementary than dualistic. This becomes clearer when Li Zhi comments on Ch. 42:

Dao produces one; one produces two; two produces three; three produces all myriad things, and all myriad things carry the negative force (yin 陰, shade) on their backs and embrace the positive force (yang 陽, light), and they achieve harmony (balance, he 和) by the qi 氣 (breath, force) of vacancy (chongqi 沖氣).

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物，萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以爲和。

Dao is “formless” (*wuxing* 無形), but it produces one, produces two, produces three, and so on, thereby producing all myriad things. This is the case in which it is [initially] minimally diminished and yet amplifies (augment) itself [later].

道無形也，而生一、生二、生三，以至萬物，是損之而益也。 (**LZJ** Ch. 42)

Importantly, Li does not follow the original expression (“*One produces two; two produces three; three produces all myriad things*”), but emphasizes that each and every generative step and thing directly relate to the invisible (“formless”) *Dao*, i.e., *Dao* as non-being. In other words, non-being and being do not belong to the two separate realms. In **LZJ** Ch. 1, Li Zhi renders *Dao* as “Ultimate Non-being” (*zhiwu* 至無), which should refer to the “Constant Non-Being” (*changwu*) that lacks any discernable physical qualities (“Namelessness” and “formlessness”). But Li also defines *Dao* as the “Ultimate Being” (*zhiyou* 至有). (1-[4]) This shifts the focus from non-being or “Constant *Dao*” to the effable *Dao* in terms of the operation of *Dao* in the domain of beings. Put differently, for Li Zhi, *Dao* cannot be understood if one does not take into account both its non-being and presence and function in the phenomenal world.³⁸⁰ This explanation of *Dao* through both non-being

³⁸⁰ At this point, one might be reminded of Zhou Dunyi’s thesis, “The Ultimate of Non-being and yet the Great Ultimate” (*wuji er taiji* 無極而太極). Zhu Xi explains:

The principle (*li*) of the world is that in the Ultimate Vacuity, there exists the Ultimate Fullness; in the Ultimate Non-Being, there exists the Ultimate Being.

天下之理，至虛之中，有至實者存；至無之中，有至有者存。 (**ZY** 13:65)

(“Ultimate Non-Being”) and being (“Ultimate Being”) is reiterated in his explanation of the phenomenal world through both being and nonbeing:

The thirty spokes [of a wheel] share one hub, whose non-being (wu, nothingness, empty space) brings the utility (yong 用) of the wheel into being. We mold clay, thereby making a container, whose non-being brings the utility of a container into being. We make room for doors and windows, thereby making a room, whose nothingness brings the utility of a room into being. Hence, being (thingness) can be regarded as [the source of prima facie] profit (li 利); non-being (nothingness) should be considered to be [the source of] the utility [of all beings.]

三十輻，共一轂，當其無，有車之用。埴埴以爲器，當其無，有器之用。鑿戶牖以爲室，當其無，有室之用。故有之以爲利，無之以爲用。

Vehicles, containers, and rooms – the utility of them, [in the first place,] consists in being (thingness, fullness), not in non-being (nothingness, empty space). However, riding, loading, and living – their functions consist in non-being, not in being. Thus, without non-being, being does not function; without being, non-being is not useful. It is *Dao* that fairly [considers] utility, thereby combining of it with function. How can humans discard non-being and follow being [only] or abandon being and seek non-being?

車也，器也，室也，其利在有，而不在無。而乘之，載之，居之，其用在無，而不在有。然則非無不有，非有不無，是均利而兼用之道也。人亦安能棄無而遂有，舍有而求無也與哉！(LZJ Ch. 11)

The examples of vehicles, containers, and rooms are more practical than theoretical. Thus, this chapter draws on the effable *Dao* rather than the Constant *Dao*. As seen in the above, Li Zhi understands that although being and non-being cannot but be differentiated, neither of them can be discarded because without each other, they cannot be useful or functional. To this effect, the differentiation of being and non-being results in a dynamic complementarity. This complementarity in the phenomenal world is possible due to *Dao* as both Ultimate Non-Being and Ultimate-Being. To reinforce this, Li Zhi offers a highly unusual reading of the *Laozi* Ch. 21:

The feature of the empty property (kongde 孔德) originates only from Dao. The characteristic of Dao is only vagueness and only elusiveness. [It seems] vague and elusive,

Obviously, for Zhu Xi such concepts as ultimate non-being (void) and the ultimate being (fullness) refer to *li* (principle). And, as already discussed, Yulgok elaborated on the relationship among such concepts as being/non-being, *taiji*, *li*, and *Dao*, and used such terms as the true non-being (*jinmu/zhenwu*) and the marvelous being (*myoyu/miaoyou*) to stand for *li* (*Dao*). However, Li Zhi does not associate his discussion on being and non-being with *taiji* or *li*.

but there is the image in it; [it seems] elusive and vague, but there is something in it. It seems deep and obscure, but there is the essence in it; the essence is genuine indeed, and thus there is belief in it. From time immemorial till now, such words (names) [that describe Dao] have not been gone – by this we can understand (see) the genesis of all things. How do I know that the genesis of all things is so? – In this way [of reflection on Dao].

孔德之容，惟道是從。道之爲物，惟恍惟惚。惚兮恍，其中有象；恍兮惚，其中有物。窈兮冥兮，其中有精；其中甚真，其中有信。自古及今，其名不去，以閱衆甫。吾何以知衆甫之然哉！以此。

The empty feature does not refer to virtues [of things] but *Dao*. If it refers to virtue, [it cannot make sense;] it (the empty feature) is what beings (fullness, thingness) cannot gain [as their features]. How can it be the description of the “***multitude of beings***” (*zhongyou* 衆有)? This *Dao* is vague and vague, elusive and elusive, deep and deep, obscure and obscure, so that it cannot be a being; because [in *Dao*] there are something, image, essence, and belief, it cannot be non-being. Generally, since time immemorial till now, it has been so. Hence, if we make an observation together with the multitude of beings, then we understand its [the empty feature’s] origination from *Dao*, not virtues. How do I know the multitude of beings’ origination from *Dao*? It is also just by [observing] this multitude of beings. Thus, if beings are discarded, non-being cannot be observed.

孔容，非德也，道也。若謂之德，則有不得者矣，安能爲衆有之形容哉！是道也，恍恍惚惚，窈窈冥冥，不可得而有也；有物有象，有精有信，不可得而無也。蓋自古及今，已若此矣。故合衆有而觀之，然後知其從道而非德也。吾何以知衆有之從道哉？亦以此衆有而已，舍衆有，則無所於觀矣。（*LZJ* Ch. 21）

Dao as non-being and the multitude of beings as being conceive each other. In other words, in non-being, there are conceived the multitude of beings; in the multitude of beings, non-being (*Dao*) resides; practically, only through observing the multitude of beings, the (Constant) *Dao* and (Ultimate) Non-Being can be observed. Judging from this, Li Zhi’s understanding of being and non-being is based on their interpenetration or complementarity, which supports his notion of the effable *Dao*.

However, Li Zhi’s emphasis on the interpenetration and complementarity of being and non-being serves only as a prelude to an even more radical idea; namely, the idea that *Dao* is neither being nor non-being. Li says, “This *Dao* is vague and vague, elusive and elusive, deep and deep, obscure and obscure, so that ***it cannot be a being***; because [in *Dao*] there are something, image, essence, and belief, ***it cannot be non-being***.” This still seems to suggest that *Dao* cannot be understood without its dynamic relationship with the phenomenal world. In this context, one might assert that the point is not whether one explains *Dao* by defining it as either

non-being or being but that *Dao* in itself is totally amalgamated with the reality. If this is the case, ‘*Dao* as neither being nor non-being’ can be taken to share the same import with ‘*Dao* as both being and non-being.’ Certainly, this is not an analytical discussion of concepts but a warning against one’s attitude toward philosophical concepts. This is reinforced by *LZJ* Ch. 1 (1-[5]).

C. *Dao* as non-*Dao*

Passage 1-[5] provides an interesting commentary:

1-[5] *These two things come out from the same [source], but they have different names. “The same [source]” is called “profundity.” It is profound and profound indeed. It is the gate of all subtleties.* 此兩者同出，而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。

1-[5] However, people who follow the images [of things] are attached to [the notion] of being; people who build [their idea] on the concept of “Emptiness” (*kong* 空; *Śūnyata*) [tend to] linger on [the notion of] non-being; accordingly, [for them] there are many things speakable and namable. [However, people] do not know [the truth] that although being and non-being are different in name (expression), the generations of being and non-being are the same indeed. If [we can] nullify non-being, how [much more easily can we nullify] the profundity? [Thus, it has to be said that] it is profound and yet not profound. Then how [easily can we nullify] the deeper profundity? [If this is the case,] who would believe that this is what the Constant Name and the Constant *Dao* originate from and the Constant Non-being and Constant Being are named [as such] by?

然徇象者執有，蘊空者滯無，而可道可名者衆矣。不知有無之名雖異，有無之出實同。無亦無之，何其玄也；玄又無玄，何其又玄也。而孰信其爲常名常道之所自出，常無常有之所由名者哉！

Whether one’s focus is on images or Emptiness, it results in the attachment to being or lingering on non-being and hinders one’s correct understanding of the reality of the world. This suggests that one needs to free oneself from the concepts of being and non-being. Perhaps, the dynamic complementarity or interpenetration of being and non-being is a clue to this freedom from the concepts, for the realization of such relationship can prevent one from attaching priority to either being or non-being. As a matter of fact, the *Laozi* Ch. 1 itself also

highlights one source of being and non-being, which is the “profundity” (*xuan* 玄) and *Dao*.³⁸¹

However, Li Zhi dismisses the concepts of non-being and profundity. The meaning of this dismissal can be drawn from the following last sentence of 1-[5], in which Li holds that no one would believe that *Dao* is the source of the Constant *Dao*, Name, Being, and Non-Being. As already mentioned, this can be interpreted to mean that *Dao* consists of the effable *Dao* as well as the Constant *Dao*. And, further, it can also mean that the attachment to being and non-being becomes meaningless. This seems to be the meaning of Li Zhi’s dismissal of non-being and profundity. However, when he nullifies the profundity, as a corollary, it becomes possible to hold, ‘it is *Dao* and yet non-*Dao*,’ just as “it is profound and yet not profound.” Li Zhi’s comments on the *Laozi* Chs. 23 and 35 clarify this:

Accordingly, the one who goes by Dao accords with Dao; [the one who goes by de] accords with de; [the one who goes by loss] accords with loss. The one who accords with Dao attains Dao pleasantly; the one who accords with de attains de pleasantly; the one who accords with loss attains loss pleasantly.

故從事於道者，同於道；德者，同於德；失者，同於失。同於道者者，道亦樂得之；同於德者，德亦樂得之；同於失者，失亦樂得之。

Accordingly, only the one who goes by the spontaneous *Dao* (*ziran zhi Dao* 自然之道) can understand [the practice of] assimilation [of oneself with everything], and so the one can assimilate with its virtue. In assimilating with its virtue, the one can assimilate with loss as well. Because the one assimilates with *Dao*, he can gain *Dao* pleasantly; because the one can assimilate with its virtue, the one can gain his virtue pleasantly; because the one can assimilate with losses, he can gain (accept) losses pleasantly. If one can pleasantly gain anything, [in fact,] there is no loss [to him]; if one can pleasantly lose anything, there is no gain [to strive for]; if there is neither gain nor loss, it is “*Dao-less-ness*” (*wudao* 無道). This is called “supreme happiness” (*zhile* 至樂) and being able to last long, but who can believe in this?

³⁸¹ This is obvious in the flow of Ch.1 as well as the contents of Ch.6:

The numinous of the valley never dies. It is called the profound female. The gate of the profound female is the root of Heaven and Earth. It is endlessly continuing as if it really exists. Even if it is used, it won’t be exhausted.

谷神不死，是謂玄牝。玄牝之門，是謂天地根。綿綿若存，用之不勤。

The profound female gives birth to heaven and earth – These words are most profound. Although it is used, it won’t be exhausted. How can people be tired to live or produce [something] by using and securing the profundity?

牝生天地，此言最玄。用之不勤，人亦安用守玄以勞生哉！

故惟從事於自然之道者,知其同而亦同德,同德而亦同失.同道,故樂得道;同德,故樂得德;同失,故樂得失.樂得,是無失也;樂失,是無得也;無得無失,是無道也.是謂至樂,是謂可久,而其誰信之乎! (**LZJ** Ch. 23)

If one can hold the Great Image (daxiang 大象), then the world will come [to him].
執大象,天下往

The imageless image – this is the Great Image.
無象之象,是爲大象. (**LZJ** Ch. 35)

As seen in Li's commentary on Ch. 23, a person who can understand the spontaneous *Dao* is supposed to reach the ultimate level – “*Dao-less-ness*” (*wudao*), e.g., non-*Dao*. In other words, the *ziran* of *Dao* results in the negation of the concept, *Dao*. And, the “Great Image” in Ch. 35 refers to *Dao*, as generally noted. Thus, Li's interpretation of the Great Image as the imageless image can be taken to mean that *Dao* is great because it does not have a specifiable quality that is definable as *Dao*. (*Dao-less-ness*, or non-*Dao*) Obviously, Li shakes the position of *Dao*, the supreme concept of the *Laozi*. However, this cannot be regarded as totally deviating from the import of the *Laozi* because *Laozi* says, “The highest virtue (*shangde* 上德) is not like a virtue (*bude* 不德)” (Ch. 38), “Great sound (*dayin* 大音) is faint; Great image has no shape (*wuxing* 無形)” (Ch. 41), “Straight (*zheng* 正; correct) words seem to be their opposite (*fan* 反; reverse, paradoxical),” (Ch. 78) and “Trustworthy words (*xinyan* 信言) are not beautiful.” (Ch. 81) All these words emphasize that one must guard against attachments to concepts and language.

Again, what we need to take into account in 1-[5] is that Li Zhi introduces the Buddhist concept, Emptiness (*kong*) when he unfolds his argument on profundity as non-profundity, or *Dao* as non-*Dao*. This suggests that his radical suggestion of *Dao* as non-*Dao* is influenced by another source, i.e., Buddhism. This is elaborated in the following section.

1-2) *Dao as True Emptiness beyond being and non-being*

As already discussed, the *Laozi jie* was written right after Li Zhi had written the “Gist of the *Heart-Sutra*” and was regarded as constituting a group in terms of not only the writing period but also the orientation of his thought. This is why the “Gist of the *Heart-Sutra*” was attached to the *Laozi jie* in Hong Liangxun’s 洪良巡 edition. This section discusses *Dao* as the True Emptiness, which is the background of Li Zhi’s “profundity as non-profundity,” or *Dao* as non-*Dao*. First of all, we should take a look at his Gist of the *Heart-Sutra*:

A. The *Heart Sutra* is the kernel of Buddhist theory on the heart-mind. The heart-mind does not exist originally, but people absurdly regard it as a being (*you*); however, it is not non-being (*wu*), either, but scholars stick to the idea of non-being. Once being and non-being are discerned, subject and object are established, which naturally calls for hindrance, fear, and muddle in our understanding.

心經者，佛說心之徑要也。心本無有，而世人妄以為有，亦無無，而學者執以為無。有無分，而能所立，是自罣礙也，自恐怖也，自顛倒也。

B. How can we get unfettered (*zizai* 自在; *isvara*), [then]? Can’t we see (*guan* 觀; *avalokita*) [the solution] from the unstrained Bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara (*guanzizai pusha* 觀自在 菩薩)?³⁸² She/he profoundly practices the wisdom (*Prajnaparamita*), thereby crossing over to the other shore – the realm of the absolute freedom, in which she/he spontaneously sees that (sensible and material) form (*se* 色; *rūpa*), feeling (*shou* 受; *vedanā*), perception (*xiang* 想; *saṃjñā*), impulse (*xing* 行; *samskāra*), and consciousness (*shi* 識; *vijñāna*), namely, the five elements [of all things] (*wuwen* 五蘊; *pañca skandha*) are all non-existent (*kong* 空; *Śūnyata*; empty) and that there is neither life nor death originally. Accordingly, she/he can leave the sea of painful life and death and escape all sufferings. This is the general key point of the Sutra. The rest of the Sutra again and again repeats, thereby illuminating this point.

安得自在? 獨不觀於自在菩薩乎? 彼其智慧行深，既到自在彼岸矣，斯時也，自然昭見色、受、想、行、識五蘊皆空，本無生死可得，故能出離生死苦海，而度脫一切苦厄焉。此一經之總要也。下文重重說破，皆以明此。

C. Thus, eventually, the Bodhisattva calls and tells Śāriputra the point [that can be rephrased as] ‘don’t you say I am talking about Emptiness (*kong*) because that is attachment to Emptiness. When I talk about form, it is *not* different from Emptiness; when I talk about Emptiness, it is not different from form. However, to say of non-difference only can be [narrowly] understood to mean that two things constitute a pair which [still] preserves each one (match) even if [we say that] the matches are

³⁸² Li Zhi’s words, “see this from the unstrained Bodhisattva” are an application of the meaning of “*Guanzizai pusha*.” *Guan* (see) *zizai* (free, unfettered) means that through Bodhisattva’s marvelous function, her/his holy body is seen by many people, looks after people, and is unfettered in saving people. This is also translated as *Guan shi yin* 觀世音 (see + the world + voice), which means that Bodhisattva lets the world see his holy voice and thereby get enlightened. (Yi Ki-Yeong 李箕永 trans. and comment., 般若心經 *Banya shimkyeong*, (Seoul: Hankuk bulkyo yeonkuwon, 1985), p. 34.)

unified. (Hence, the negative explanation is not yet enough to express the key point) In fact, what I mean by form “is” [positively] the very meaning of Emptiness; therefore, there is no form outside Emptiness. Not only is form non-existing, but Emptiness is non-existing. This is *True Emptiness (zhenkong 真空)*.³⁸³

故遂呼而告之曰, ‘舍利子, 勿謂吾說空, 便即著空也! 如我說色, 不異於空也; 如我說空, 不異於色也。然但言不異, 猶是二物有對, 雖復合而為一, 猶存一也。其實我所說色, 即是說空, 色之外無空矣。我所說空, 即是說色, 空之外無色矣。非但無色, 而亦無空, 此真空也。’

D. Accordingly, the Bodhisattva again calls and tells “Śāriputra, all things (*fā 法; dhārma*) are characterized by Emptiness.” There is no such a thing that can be called “emptiness” How can there be such things that can be called origination/extinction, dirtiness/cleanness, increase/decrease, etc? Therefore form does not originate indeed; emptiness does not become extinct indeed. To discuss form is not dirty; to discuss Emptiness is not pure, and in form there is no increase; in Emptiness there is no decrease. This is not a conjecture. Originally in Emptiness there is no such an event as increase or decrease. Thus, the five elements are marked by Emptiness, and so there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no impulse, and no consciousness; the six sense-organs are marked by Emptiness and, therefore, there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, and no mind; the six kinds of sensation are marked by Emptiness, and so there is no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, and no thing touchable (*dhārma*); all kinds of realms are marked by Emptiness, and so the non-existence of the realm of sight is followed [eventually] by the non-existence of the realm of consciousness. As a result, birth, aging, disease, and death do not arise, nor do enlightenment/ignorance, the four noble truth, and wisdom to prove the truth by. This is the other shore that the unstrained Bodhisattva reaches by meditating on wisdom, thereby attaining no-attainment. Since there is no-attainment there is naturally no barrier, no fear, and no upside-down daydream. Not only Bodhisattva but also all Buddhas of the past, present, and future reach the other shore by wisdom, so as to together achieve the highest, right, and perfect enlightenment (*wushang zhengdeng zhengjue 無上正等正覺; anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi*). This could ensure that all beings on earth cannot but be [capable of being] Buddhas. In other words, the understanding of this marvelous wisdom of True Emptiness (*zhenkong*) is the great numinous spell, the great illuminating spell, the highest spell, and the unequalled spell, enabling [people] to leave the sea of painful life and death and to allay all sufferings. [This True Emptiness] is not hollow (useless) indeed.

故又呼而告之曰, “舍利子, 是諸法空相。” 無空可名, 何況更有生滅、垢淨、增減、名相? 是故色本不生, 空本不滅, 說色非垢, 說空非淨; 在色不增, 在空不減。非億之也, 空中原無是耳。是故五蘊皆空, 無色、受、想、行、識也。六根皆空, 無眼、耳、鼻、舌、身、意也。六塵皆空, 無色、聲、香、味、觸法也。十八界皆空, 無眼界乃至無意識界也。以至生老病死, 明與無明, 四諦智證等, 皆無所得此, 自在菩薩智慧觀照到無所得之彼岸也。如此所得既無, 自然無罣礙恐怖與夫顛倒夢想矣, 現視生死而究竟涅槃矣。豈惟菩薩, 雖過去現在未來三世諸佛, 亦以此智慧得到彼岸, 共成無上

³⁸³ This is not a direct quotation from the Sutra but Li Zhi’s rephrasing and interpretation of the original passage, “Form is not different from emptiness; emptiness is not different from form. And form is emptiness; emptiness is form” (色不異於空也; 空不異於色。色即是空; 空即是色).

正等正覺焉耳，則信乎盡大地眾生無有不是佛者。乃知此真空妙智，是大神呪，是大明呪，是無上呪，是無等等呪，能出離生死苦海，度脫一切苦厄，真實不虛也。

E. Therefore, the difficulty in discussing emptiness has continued for a long time. People who stick to form are susceptible to indulgence in form; people who talk about emptiness are prone to stagnation in emptiness. If we do not rely on both form and emptiness, we can eradicate causalities. If we do not believe in the obvious acclamation in the Sutra, “Emptiness is form,” can we find another kind of emptiness? If we do not believe that form is emptiness, can we find another kind of form? Since there is neither emptiness nor form, how can there still be being and non-being to obstruct me from being unstrained? And so if meditators always observe and reflect (*guan Zhao* 觀照) by their wisdom, they should be able to get to the other shore naturally. How can Bodhisattvas be another kind of human being? They are able to single-mindedly observe and reflect. Each and every person has [the potential of] Bodhisattva but cannot find it by her/himself. Thus when we talk about Bodhisattva, [we must say that] each and every person is equal [in terms of the potentiality] and so there is neither sage nor idiot; when we talk about all Buddhas of the past, present, and future, [we must say that] old and new are all the same and so there is neither former nor latter. What on earth can we do? Why are there so many people that can be made work but cannot be made understand (know) [their potentiality]? If they can be made understand, they will become Bodhisattvas; otherwise, they become the common people, animals (birds and beasts), and wood/stone, and they, at last, become extinct. 然則空之難言也久矣。執色者泥色，說空者滯空，及至兩無所依，則又一切撥無因果。不信經中分明讚歎，空即是色，更有何空；色即是空，更有何色；無空無色，尚何有有有無，於我罣礙而不得自在耶？然則觀者但以自家智慧時常觀照，則彼岸當自得之矣。菩薩豈異人哉？但能一觀照之焉耳。人人皆菩薩，而不自見也。故言菩薩，則人人一矣，無聖愚也。言三世諸佛，則古今一矣，無先後也。柰之何可使由而不可使知者眾也？可使知，則為菩薩；不可使知，則為凡民，為禽獸，為木石，卒歸於泯泯爾矣！³⁸⁴

The second sentence in passage E assures us of the relationship between this article and the *Laozi jie* Ch. 1 (1-[5]); there is a striking similarity between the two in idea and expression. And this warning against the attachment to either form/emptiness or being/non-being is repeated from A to E, and obviously relates to the problem of the heart-mind as seen in A. In other words, people have an illusion about the heart-mind. Mediocre people regard the heart-mind as being because they think that there is a clear distinction between being and non-being and the heart-mind is a real being; on the other hand, intelligent people consider the heart-mind non-being because they think that the ultimate reality is non-being, i.e., Emptiness. What is common between them is that they do not realize

³⁸⁴ “*Xinjing tigang*” 心經提綱 (Gist of the *Heart-Sutra*), Zashu, *FS*, *juan* 3, pp. 100-101.

that being and non-being interpenetrate each other, and thus such a distinction between being and non-being is delusive. (In the next section, the heart-mind will be discussed in detail.) Since Buddhism emphasizes the truth that nothing has an eternal and fixed substance and quality (Refer to **B** and “*Sāriputra, all things are characterized by emptiness.*” (**D**)), Buddhists or scholars are susceptible to the attachment to emptiness or non-being; likewise, due to the outstanding character of *wu*-related concepts in the *Laozi*, students of Laozi philosophy tend to give priority to non-being. However, when one is enlightened on the truth that the concepts of being/non-being and subject/object are devised by the human heart-mind and, further, the human heart-mind is not entitled to be called a substantial subject and to discern being from non-being, one can realize that the existence of the heart-mind and the concept of being (form)/non-being (Emptiness) are merely illusive. (**A**) This realization leads to the idea of “True Emptiness.” – “*Not only is form non-existing, but emptiness is non-existing. This is True Emptiness*” (**C**); “*There is no such a thing that can be called Emptiness.*” (**D**) Although the concept of the heart-mind is dismissed by Li Zhi from the beginning, it is important to note that the purpose of “True Emptiness” still consists in providing an insight into cultivation of the heart-mind, i.e., meditation, as seen in passage **E**. This suggests that True Emptiness does not aim to negate everything ontologically but to epistemologically and axiologically gain the wisdom (*prajnaparamita*) for freedom from delusion (“*getting unstrained*” “*crossing over to the other shore – the realm of the absolute freedom*” (**B**); *wushang zhengdeng zhengjue* (**D**)). Hence, people who are aware of True Emptiness would deal with practical matters without bias rather than have an apathy to them (“*To discuss form is not dirty; to discuss emptiness is not pure*” (**D**)), which has already been highlighted in the previous chapter (“*wearing clothing, eating food, and excretion*”).

Passage **C** is worth noting in that it discusses the non-difference of being and non-being and, further, suggests the necessity of the oneness of being and non-being and True

Emptiness as neither being nor non-being, which is certainly discussed as a topic in the *Laozi jie* Ch. 1. Here we need to revisit 1-[5]:

1-[5-a] [However, people] do not know [the truth] that although being and non-being are different in name (expression), the generation of being and that of non-being are the same indeed. 1-[5-b] If [we can] nullify non-being, how [much more easily can we nullify] the profundity? [Thus, it has to be said that] it is profound and yet not profound. Then how [easily can we nullify] the deeper profundity? 1-[5-c] [If this is the case,] who would believe that this is what the Constant Name and *Dao* originate from and the Constant Non-being and Constant Being are named [as such] by?

In 1-[5-a], Li explains that being and non-being look different but are not different because both are caused by the same thing, i.e., *Dao*. And, according to the *Laozi*, the homogeneity of being and non-being in terms of origin is called “profundity” (*xuan*). But in 1-[5-b], Li Zhi suddenly negates non-being and profundity, and, subsequently, in 1-[5-c], suggests that if his negation is the case, one can dismiss the concept of profundity, i.e., *Dao* as either the origin of the Constant Name and *Dao* or the base for the Constant Non-Being and Being. This cannot be properly understood without reference to passage C in the “Gist of the *Heart-Sutra*.” In other words, Li Zhi interprets the homogeneity of being and non-being as the equality or interchangeability of being (form) and non-being (emptiness) (“*In fact, what I mean by form is the very meaning of Emptiness; therefore, there is no form outside Emptiness.*” (C)), and thereby dismisses the distinction between non-being and being. When the distinction between being and non-being is dismissed, the concepts are insignificant, and the homogeneity of being and non-being, i.e., profundity does not have to be emphasized; such an emphasis can be considered still to be based upon the distinction between being and non-being. As a corollary, the emphasis on *Dao* as the genesis of the binary structure (i.e., Constant *Dao* and Non-Being and the effable *Dao* and names) can eventually be regarded as unnecessary. At this point, *Dao* can be rendered as True Emptiness, or *Dao* as non-*Dao*. Accurately put, to discuss *Dao* as the source of the binary structure becomes meaningless, and when we can understand *Dao* as non-*Dao* or True Emptiness, we can have a chance to see the

world as it is, without bias about daily matters. A *prima facie* sheer metaphysical concept, True Emptiness can result in a concern for practicality this way.³⁸⁵

As we have seen, Li Zhi does not associate his discussion on *Dao* and being/non-being with Neo-Confucian *taiji* or *li*, as Yulgok does. The reason for that may be that the concepts of *Dao* and being/non-being are to be methodologically dismissed in order to curb our propensity for metaphysics, i.e., attachment to overarching concepts; in doing so, we can gain freedom and practicality in understanding the world. As seen in the above, Li Zhi's dismissal of the overarching position of *Dao* begins with the negation of "profundity." Li's radical position can be more clearly shown by contrast with Su Zhe's commentary:

1-[5-A] *These two things come out from the same [source], but they have different names. "The same [source]" is called "profundity."* **1-[5-B]** *It is profound and profound indeed. It is the gate of all subtleties.*

此兩者，同出而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。

1-[5-A] If one discusses being and non-being in terms of shape, then he would believe in dualism (both modes). How can he understand that non-being can unfold and turn into being and that being can be reduced again into non-being, so that both can never be split? The names are different; nevertheless, the origin is one (the same). If one knows the oneness of their origins, one's understanding should be profound (*xuan*). Generally, something too far away or deep to reach its end should be tinged with a dark (*xuan*: profound) color. Accordingly, Laozi usually draws on darkness, and thereby implies the ultimate.

以形而言有無，(則)信兩矣，安知無運而為有，有復而為無，未嘗不一哉。其名雖異，其本則一，知本之一也，則玄矣。凡遠而無所至極者，其色必玄，故老子常以“玄”寄極也。

1-[5-B] To say of darkness (profundity) is to mean the utmost, but this implies that one still has a mind that harbors [the concept of] the profound (dark). "Dark and again dark," then all will have been exhausted, so that nothing can be added to it, which is the origin from which all subtleties come out.

言玄則至矣，然猶有玄之心在焉。玄之又玄則盡矣，不可以有加矣，衆妙之所從出也。³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ Mizoguchi Yūzō points out that the idealistic (*weixin zhuyi* 唯心主義) Buddhist concept, True Emptiness ironically causes this materialistic tendency (*weiwu zhuyi* 唯物主義); however, this does not necessarily mean that Chan Buddhism, or True Emptiness is progressive *per se*; rather, Li Zhi's realistic attitude made the True Emptiness progressive. (*Ibid.*, pp. 236-237.)

³⁸⁶ Su Zhe, *Daode zhen jing zhu*, **ZD** 12:291c; *San su quanshu*, volume 5, p. 401; *Laozi yi*, *juan* 1, p. 2.

Su Zhe's understanding of "profundity" (darkness) focuses on the ultimate-ness and exhaustiveness of *Dao*. Thus, he concludes the comments with the emphasis on the concept of subtlety; this term belongs to none other than the Constant *Dao* and Name. Accordingly, Su Zhe's commentary can marginalize practical matters, i.e., the effable *Dao* and names notwithstanding Su too affirms them at the beginning. On the other hand, Li Zhi does not comment on the "gate of all subtleties" (*zhongmiao* 衆妙); rather, Li suggests the possibility of dismissing what "subtlety" can be associated with, as is already seen. This may be because of his unbiased concern for the "multitude of beings" (*zhongyou* 衆有), which is undoubtedly caused by *Dao* as True Emptiness.

1-3) *Dao as Criterion as Non-Criterion: Ziran and Wuwei*

As seen in the foregoing, the import of *Dao* as the True Emptiness is mainly to warn against the propensity of our heart-mind. In other words, Li Zhi's disturbing our usual understanding of *Dao*, being/non-being (Emptiness), and profundity targets our heart-mind's attachment to such concepts that are based on delusive distinctions, for instance, the Constant *Dao*/non-Constant *Dao*, non-being/being, etc. Such distinctions can be construed as dualism or binary structure. The thesis of the interpenetration and homogeneity of being and non-being disturb such distinctions and dualism. This thesis, however, does not yet capture the import of Li Zhi's *Dao* as True Emptiness because Li's True Emptiness dismisses even the thesis of interpenetration and homogeneity; in fact, the thesis still assume the existence of opposites. Then the import of *Dao* as True Emptiness would be to take things as they are, without conceptualizing them. In this case, *Dao* would not function as a criterion to judge right or wrong. In Ch. 2, Li Zhi recounts this point:

2-[1] *When all people of the world regard beauty as beauty, there is already the concept of ugliness. When all people of the world regard good as good, there is already the concept of evil. Therefore being and non-being are produced by each other; difficulty and easiness are completed by each other; being long and short contrast each other; being high and*

low distinguish each other; sound and voice harmonize with each other; front and back are followed by each other.

天下皆知美之爲美，斯惡已；皆知善之爲善，斯不善已。故有無相生，難易相成，長短相形，高下相傾，音聲相和，前後相隨。

2-[1-Ex.] Xishi 西施 is a beauty who is regarded as such by humans; however, when fish see her standing nearby, they flee deeper into water [to avoid her]; when birds see her coming close, they fly away; when animals see her around, they burst out running away. [Zhuangzi 2:6] What is regarded as beautiful by us – Is this really what can be [objectively] regarded as beautiful? [A bandit,] Daozhi 盜跖 was really ferocious and barbarous, but [ironically] his gang recited righteousness interminably [Zhuangzi 8:2]; Baiyi and Shuqi were starved to death [in order to blame the Zhou's 周 violation of Confucian ethics], however, the kings, Wen 文 and Wu 武 [of the Zhou] were not defamed; [rather, they have been praised].

2-[1-Expl.] What we regard as [morally] good – Is this really what can be regarded as good? There is no other reason [for that confusion] than this: [the concepts of] good and evil and nice and loathsome are *mutually formed by binary pairs* (*liangliang xiangxing* 兩兩相形), which is like the *interdependence* (*xiangdai* 相待; correlativity) of being and non-being, difficult and easy, long and short, high and low, sound (call) and voice (response), front and rear, and the like. Once there is something, it is accompanied by another thing, constituting a pair. Who can discard this tendency?

西施，人之所美也，魚見之深入，鳥見之高飛，獸見之決驟，美者果可以爲美乎？盜跖暴戾，其徒誦義無窮；夷、齊、餓死，而文、武之王不損，善者果可以爲善乎？無他故焉，善惡好丑，兩兩相形，猶之有/無、難/易、長/短、高/下、音/聲、前/後之相待也，有則俱有，誰能去之！

Li Zhi cites examples from the *Zhuangzi* and history, showing the relativity and temporality of aesthetic and ethical judgment. (2-[1-Ex.]) Subsequently, Li explains that value judgment is rooted in a binary system, or the interdependence of opposite concepts such as being/non-being, conceding that these binary concepts are practically inevitable. For Li, this insight of Laozi is applicable to such concepts as *yin/yang*, sturdiness/flexibility, and male/female in the *Zhouyi*:

Good and evil constitute a pair (*dui* 對) and so do *yin/yang*, sturdiness/flexibility, and male/female. Generally speaking, if there are two, they become the matches of a pair. Hence, when there are two, the situation or tendency cannot but establish hollow and fake names, thereby distinguishing one from the other (*fenbie* 分別). It is nothing more than Mr. Li 李 and Mr. Zhang's 張 bullshit. Is it correct to say, "Mr. Li is a human, and thus Mr. Zhang is not"?

善與惡對，猶陰與陽對，剛與柔對，男與女對。蓋有兩則有對，既有兩矣，其勢不得不立虛假之名以分別之。如張三、李四之糞是也。若謂張三是人而李四非人，可歟？³⁸⁷

³⁸⁷ “Yu Tao Shikui” 與陶石簣, Shuhui, *XFS*, *juan* 1, p. 49.

Li's conceding of the inevitability of binary structure does not mean that one is encouraged to stick to the distinction between good and evil, being and non-being, and the like. Rather, Li's point is that one should not stick to either good or evil even if such concepts are inevitable. To elaborate on this point, in Ch. 2, Li subsequently takes the example of sages who internalize *Dao* and practice no (deliberate) action (*wuwei*) and wordless teaching:

2-[2] *Thus sages deal with affairs without [deliberate] actions (wuwei) and teach wordless teachings (buyan zhi jiao). All things take place and they do not turn away from those things. They produce them, but do not possess themselves of those things. Although they do something, they do not presume on it. Although they have accomplishments, they do not stagnate in them. Generally, because they do not abide in their accomplishments, their achievements do not vanish (go).*

是以聖人處無爲之事，行不言之教。萬物作焉而不辭，生而不有，爲而不恃，功成而弗居。夫唯弗居，是以不去。

2-[2] Hence, sages thereupon govern the world by no [artificial] action and teach people without a word. Why do they do so? Generally, as a matter of fact, sages have never done anything to all other humans and things, nor have they produced them, nor have they taken actions. Therefore, although ten thousands things seem to carelessly arise and work, [in conformity with the example of sages] they unwittingly take modesty and humbleness as beauty, and they are generated by something but do not hold to that by which they come into being (the notion of their origin), and although they endeavor to do something, they do not presume on that by which they become themselves (the notion of self). This means that although ten thousands things develop themselves by themselves (*zicheng* 自成), it is not credited to sages. Ah, surprisingly! How worthy it is! Generally, not to have everything to one's credit is what is worth abiding in. Hence, beauty is not what one should abide in, and ugliness (*e* 惡; loathsomeness) too is not what one should dismiss accordingly; good is not what one should abide in, and bad (no good) too is not what one should dismiss. The point is nothing other than this.

是以聖人於此，無爲而事治，不言而教行。蓋聖人之於萬物，實未嘗爲之，生之，作之也。故萬物并作而不知遜讓以爲美，竝生而不有其所以生我者，竭力以爲之，而不恃其所以爲我者。若爲萬物之自成，而非聖人之功也。嗚乎，居乎！夫惟無功之可居。是以美固弗居，惡亦弗去；善固弗居，不善亦弗去，如斯而已矣。

As seen, Li Zhi's point is that one should not judge and control things on the basis of one's value system; things are supposed to develop by themselves, reaching the optimal status (*zicheng*). Hence, sages just let things be themselves – this is the meaning of “no action” (*wuwei*) and “wordless teachings” (*buyan zhi jiao*) and should refer to none other than *ziran* as the characteristic of *Dao*. Sages internalize *Dao*, and thereby exemplify *Dao*. The *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao* and sages are, however, not understood to be apathetic to reality and practicality

but to help take things as they originally are and to let them find their natural ways, without conceptualizing and judging them. The practice of *ziran* and *wuwei* is possible only when one neither lingers on good nor discards evil exclusively. However, it is not clear how one can practice the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao*. In Ch. 20, Li Zhi gives us a clue to this question:

20-[1] *Cut off learning, and there will be no worry. How much difference is there between ‘Yes, sir’ and ‘No way’? How much difference is there between ‘good’ and ‘evil’? What people dread, do not fail to dread. But, alas, how confused, and the end is not yet.*
絕學無憂。唯之與阿，相去幾何？善之與惡，相去何若？人之所畏，不可不畏。荒兮，其未央哉！

20-[1] Generally, how much difference is there between “Yes, sir” and “No way” and good and evil? People regard “No way” as arrogant and evil as evil. However, it is all right for me to dread the same things that people dread. Nevertheless, although I dread what people dread, in fact, mine is not the same as what others dread. Why? Because most people dread that which they dread, but I [freely] go beyond and give in to what people dread. Alas! It can never be concluded – How can there be [really] something to dread!

夫唯阿、善惡，相去有幾？而人乃以阿爲慢，以惡爲惡，而畏之。雖然，人之所畏，吾亦畏之，可也。然雖畏人之所畏，而實不同於人之畏。何也？人皆畏其所畏，我則出畏入畏。荒兮，其未央也，何畏之有！

Li Zhi explains that a practitioner of *Dao* (wu 吾; I, me) does not have to deliberately deny the value system of others; a denial of common values calls for an alternative value system as the basis of the denial, which can be followed by an objection based on another system. Thus, as Li holds, a man of *Dao* (“I”) does not deny the value system of the common people nor does he subscribe to the value system. (“*Although I dread what people dread, in fact, mine is not the same as what others dread*”; “*I go beyond and give in to what people dread.*”) This is the practice of *ziran* and *wuwei*; a man of *ziran* and *wuwei* is not fettered by the usual value system nor does he intervene in it. This practice may look ambiguous and passive. However, for Li Zhi *Dao* as True Emptiness and *ziran* and *wuwei* is a clear and active criterion because it can positively lead the agent, “I” to reality, thereby making the agent accept the natural change of things. However, such a criterion is not an usual criterion in the sense that the agent (“I”) never sticks to a specific artificial value system that cannot but cause inconsistency

in understanding reality by confining the ever-changing reality within the system. In Ch. 23, Li points this out:

23-[1] *Inaudible (wordless) words are from spontaneity (ziran). A gale cannot last even for a whole morning; a rainstorm cannot last even for a whole daytime. Who generate them? It is Heaven and Earth. If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last long, how much less can people?*

希言自然。故飄風不終朝，驟雨不終日。孰爲此者？天地。天地尚不能久，而況於人乎？

23-[1] The sages of old spoke words inaudibly and took actions invisibly, which were all caused by their spontaneity (*ziran*). Thus, although [they existed] for a long time, [their influence or lesson] cannot be exhausted. The world may ignore (oppress) [sages' influence or lesson], regarding it as inferior to the pleasure of sophisticated theories and the sensations of eccentric behaviors [because] the world does not know that such [theories and behaviors' impact] cannot last long – those things can be compared to [the examples of] a rainstorm and a gale. If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last for more than a whole morning or daytime, how much less can humans?

古之聖人，言出於希，行出於夷，皆因其自然。故久而不窮。世或壓之，以爲不若詭辯之悅耳，怪行之驚世，不知其不能久也。譬則驟雨與飄風然，雖天地亦不能使之終朝與終日也，而況人乎！

Li points out that inaudible words and invisible actions of ancient sages, i.e., *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao*, are apt to be regarded by people as irrelevant and ineffective even compared to futile theories and eccentric behaviors because they do not seem to have an immediate and tangible effect. However, their influence is ceaseless and inexhaustible; to this effect, the *ziran* and *wuwei* of ancient sages and *Dao* can be said to be more relevant and effective than any others. The value systems of the common people cannot last long; therefore, to stick to it is of no use. To explain the relevance of the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao*, Li Zhi takes an example from “water”:

8-[1] *The higher good is like water. Water is good, and so it benefits all things but does not compete with them. It dwells in (lowly) places that all people disdain. This is why it is almost like Dao. 8-[2]* *[The one who has the quality of water, i.e., Dao] dwells well in lowly places; his heart (center) is nicely profound; he has the nice humanity to others; in speaking, he is nicely trustworthy; in governance, he nicely controls [people]; in his jobs, he is abler; his movement is nicely timely. Generally, only when there is no competition, there is no fault.*

上善若水，水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾於道。居善地，心善淵，與善仁，言善信，正(政)善治，事善能，動善時。夫唯不爭，故無尤。

8-[1] The text means that there is no higher good in the world than that of water, and the good of the sages is comparable to [that of water]. What is called “good”? Generally speaking, [it refers to] what benefits others or [the situation in which] there cannot but

be competitions but one is able to avoid competing with others. The good of water is that it benefits all myriad things and does not compete with them. From what can we see the non-competitiveness of water? Most people like to be highly positioned, whereas water alone positions itself below; most people like to be treated as noble, whereas water alone is willing to be humble; most people prefer easiness, whereas water alone does not mind difficulty; most people prefer compliance, whereas water is ready to accept an adverse flow caused by an external power; most people like cleanliness, whereas water is willing to bear dirtiness. Since water can stay in places where most people do not like to stay, who would compete with water? If it does not compete, it does not have any fault – this is that by which water has the higher good. 言天下之善者，莫上於水，而聖人之善若之。何謂善？蓋凡利於物者，或不能以無爭而能不爭者，又未必能澤於物也。水之善，固利萬物而不爭者也。何以見其不爭也？衆人處上，彼獨處下；衆人處高，彼獨處卑；衆人處易，彼獨處險；衆人處順，彼或外逆；衆人處潔，彼或處穢。所處盡衆人之所惡，夫誰與之爭乎！不爭，則無尤矣，此所以爲上善也。

8-[2] All the seven phrases starting from “As to his residence, [the sage] resides well (*shan*) on the surface of the earth” (*ju shan di* 居善地) show that sages benefit all things and yet do not compete with others. Su Ziyou said, “[Water] avoids higher places, heading for lower places, and it has never flowed adversely [of itself]. [That is why water] resides well (*shan*) on the surface of the earth. Water looks empty, vacuous, still, and calm, and thereby so profound to fathom. [This is why water] is indeed (*shan*) profound. Water benefits and favors all myriad things but does not wish to be rewarded for the favor. [That is why water] is indeed (*shan*) humane (*ren* 仁). Water turns around when the lay [of a river] is round; it erodes the corner when the lay is square; it certainly stops when it is blocked out; it certainly flows when a way out is given. [That is why water] is indeed (*shan*) trustworthy. Water can wash out all kinds of dirt and level the higher and the lower [into the average]. [That is why water] can effectively (*shan*) rule [nature]. Water can fit into whatever shape when it meets [various] things, and it does not tend to shape itself into a specific shape. [That is why water] is indeed (*shan*) capable [of anything]. Water freezes in winter and melts in spring, and it does not lose the regularity in being dried and overflown. [That is why water] is indeed (*shan*) timely.”

“居善地”七句，皆聖人利萬物而不爭之實。蘇子曰，避高趨下，未嘗有所逆，善地也；空虛靜默，深不可測，善淵也。利澤萬物，施而不求報，善仁也；圓必折，塞必止，決必流，善信也；洗滌群穢，平準高下，善治也；遇物賦形，而不流於一，善能也；冬凝春泮，涸溢不失節，善時也。

Li Zhi identifies the good of water (i.e., the “higher good”) with that of sages (*ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao*), redefining “good” (*shan*) as the quality that benefit all things without marginalizing anything and do not compete with others over so-called good things (“*high positions*,” “*nobility*,” “*easiness*,” “*compliance*,” and “*cleanliness*”). The usual definition of “good” in the world is based on a binary pair, ‘good and evil,’ which can be compared to people’s preference and abhorrence in choosing things. The good of water or *Dao* cannot be

regarded as ‘moral good,’ i.e., the competing opposite pair of evil. In this regard, of particular interest is that Li Zhi holds, “Water is ready to accept an adverse flow caused by an external power.” (8-[1]) This means that Li thinks that even *prima facie* evil phenomena occur through the interaction between *Dao* and circumstances, and further that *Dao* does not have any intention to regard it as evil. Then the good of water and *Dao* should refer to the good as ‘being beyond good and evil,’ or ‘neither good nor evil.’ In this case, the good of water and *Dao*, i.e., the “higher good” is not ethical good but trans-ethical good. As seen in the *Laozi* and Li and Su’s commentaries, the good of water or *Dao*, i.e., “higher good” is understood as “well or effectively or indeed” (*shan*) rather than ‘moral good’; the good of water and *Dao* is not an intention to be ethically good but an unassertive force by which everything can be ideally realized. The good of *Dao* as the optimum of everything ranges from humanity and trustworthiness to all other things including government, capability (malleability), timeliness, etc. Even evil and the bad status of everything materialize in connection with the goodness of *Dao*, as seen in the example of “adverse flow of water.” By the same token, the ethical effect of water and *Dao* is also made possible by the goodness of water and *Dao*, i.e., the trans-ethicality of water and *Dao*. At this point, we are reminded of Yulgok’s thought on *Dao* (*li*) as ‘neither good nor evil’ or ‘that by which everything good or bad is as such.’ Yulgok also used the example of water to explain this point.³⁸⁸

In sum, Li Zhi’s critical understanding of common value systems involving binary concepts is based on his understanding of the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao*. And, as discussed, this cannot but relate to the trans-ethicality of *Dao*. Only if this is possible, a man of *Dao* can avoid denying and intervening in a common value system and she/he does not have to be confined within the system. The transcendence of *Dao* makes possible phenomena including the common value system, and it is not definable as if it is a specific phenomenon, i.e., ethical

³⁸⁸ Refer to III. *Yulgok on the Laozi*.

good or evil. But it needs to be mentioned that insofar as the transcendence of *Dao* is the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao*, this transcendence means neither idealism nor metaphysics. In this way, for Li Zhi *Dao* occupies the position of a criterion and yet it does not function as an impositional metaphysical criterion. Ch. 4 effectively summarizes and supports our understanding:

4-[1] *Dao is empty, and so although it is used, it is inexhaustible.* 4-[2] *How deep it is! It seems to be the origin of all myriad things.* 4-[3] *[Dao] blunts its sharpness and unties its tangles, and thereby harmonize its light [with other things] and become one with the dust (world).* 4-[4] *How limpid it is! It seems to exist. I do not know whose son he is. [He seems to have existed] even before the yellow emperor.*

道沖，而用之或不盈。淵乎，似萬物之宗。挫其銳，解其紛，和其光，同其塵。湛兮，似若存。吾不知誰之子，象帝之先。

4-[1] Generally, it is *Dao* that is empty and barren (*chongmo* 沖漠), so as not to be filled. But when *Dao* is put into use, it may look full and [seems to have] lost the [quality of] being empty and barren.

夫沖漠而不盈者，道也。而用之者或見其盈，則失其所以沖漠者矣。

4-[2] Therefore, *Dao* is as deep as an abyss, so as to maintain constant stillness; even if the myriad streams flowed into [*Dao*], [we] would not see [*Dao*] full of them. Sages internalize *Dao* in them, so that they are deeply profound, still, and vast as if they do not have limitations. Although [*Dao*] looks like the origin (generator) of all myriad things, *Dao* does not have [such quality of] being the origin.

故淵乎常止，雖萬流歸之，而不見其盈。聖人體道於身，淵深靜遠，無有涯涘。一似萬物之宗，而非有以宗之也。

4-[3] Therefore, *Dao* always blunts its sharpness, thereby showing its inability (*buneng* 不能); it unties its tangles, thereby showing its inutility (*buyong* 不用); it harmonizes its light with other things, thereby moving around in the world; it assimilates with the earth, thereby getting harmonious with the mundane.

故常挫其銳，以示不能；解其紛，以示不用；和光，以游於世；同塵，以諧於俗。

4-[4] How limpid it is! It is constantly still. *Dao* does not seem to exist; [on the other hand,] it seems to exist. If so, whose son is it really? I am afraid that this *Dao* might not have been easily met (recognized) even by the Yellow emperor. Did meanings [of words] exist even before the Yellow emperor? Generally, *sea* is the terminal of all rivers; however, [such a thing that is called] sea does not exist, but what we can see is just the [qualities of] depth [and width]. Sages are [regarded as] the origin (inventors) of ten thousands things; however, [such persons that are called] sages do not exist, but what we can see is just the [quality of] limpidity. All people who [like to] show off their abilities and talents, shining forth and astonishing others, are assured of their [outstanding] existence; however, people who seek to penetrate [many] things cannot be the inventor of ten thousands things. Generally speaking, only that which does not [claim to be] the origin can be regarded as the origin of ten thousands things. Who is able to believe this [truth]?

湛兮常寂，似亡，若存焉耳。然此果伊誰之子乎？吾恐此道也，雖黃帝未易當之。意者，其在帝之先歟？夫海為衆流之歸，而海無有也，但見其淵乎而已矣。聖人為萬物之宗，

聖人無有也, 但見其湛兮而已矣. 皮逞能挾才, 露光駭衆者, 皆自以其有, 而求通於物者也, 非萬物之宗矣. 夫惟無其宗者, 乃可以爲萬物之宗, 而其誰信之!

As the *Laozi* says, Li Zhi also explains that the empty and barren (*chongmo*) *Dao* is the origin of all myriad things, which refers to the typical meta-physical, transcendent quality of *Dao*. However, Li clarifies that *Dao* in action does not have such quality nor does it seem to even exist; it just intermingles with the mundane reality. Of particular notice is that Li Zhi connects *Dao* directly with sages, thereby implying that just as *Dao* and water (“sea”), sages do not claim to be the assertive and impositional criterion in the world. *Dao* and sages do not compete with other things nor do they intend to forcibly change the worldly values. Thus, they seem to show their “inability” and “inutility”; however, such aspects are the essential quality of being the origin of all things including both good and evil.

2. *Dao*, *Virtue (de)*, and *Heart-mind*

2-1) *Virtue (de): Nature or Effect?*

As seen in III, Yulgok on the *Laozi*, Yulgok defines Laozi’s “virtue” (*de*) as the Neo-Confucian “nature” (*xing*). One might assume that Li Zhi as a Yangming scholar would define “virtue” in the *Laozi* as the “heart-mind” (*xin*). Given that Yangming learning defines the heart-mind as nature, *li*, and the “bright virtue” (*mingde* 明德) in the *Great Learning*, it is plausible to think that the concept of the heart-mind in the *Laozi jie* can relate to the concept of virtue in the *Laozi*.

However, there might be some questions regarding the above assumption. First, in his commentaries on the *Laozi*, Li Zhi does not define virtue in the *Laozi* as the heart-mind as Yulgok explicitly does. Second, one might doubt whether Li Zhi has a notion of the heart-mind because Li holds that the heart-mind does not even exist from the beginning,

criticizing people's attachment to the concept of the heart-mind; accordingly, the concept of the heart-mind may not relate to the virtue concept in the *Laozi jie*. But, as will be presented in this section, Li Zhi still draws on the notion of the heart-mind in his commentaries on the *Laozi*, and the concept of the heart-mind seems to be connected with the concept of *de* in the *Laozi*.

A. Virtue as Nature

I first discuss Li Zhi's understanding of *de* in the *Laozi* before examining the notion of the heart-mind in conjunction with the *de* concept. Ch. 51 touches on the issue of *de*:

51-[1] ① Dao gives births [to all things]; ② Virtues (*de*) [of all things] nourish [things]; ③ things (*wu* 物) take shape; ④ the tendencies in situations (*shi* 勢; force, vector) get formed.
51-[2] Therefore, no thing does not pay respect to Dao and cherish *de*. [The so-called] respectability of Dao and nobleness of *de* are, generally, not what are dubbed [by someone else] but what are constantly self-so (*ziran*: naturalness, spontaneity). Therefore Dao gives births [to all things]; Virtues (*de*) [of all things] nourish [themselves]. They rear, foster, adjust, discipline, nourish, and cover things. Although [Dao] produces things, it does not possess them; although it takes action, it does not presume on [the outcome]; although [*de*] nourishes things, it does not control it. This is called "the profound virtue (*xuande* 玄德)."

道生之，德畜之，物形之，勢成之，是以萬物莫不尊道而貴德，道之尊，德之貴，夫莫之命而常自然，故道生之，德畜之，長之育之，亭之毒之，養之覆之，生而不有，爲而不恃，長而不宰，是謂玄德。

51-[1] Things (*wu*) are given shapes by *Dao*, and tendencies in situations are formed by virtues.
 物形於道，勢成於德。

51-[2] The nobleness of *Dao* and virtues cannot be equaled! And they are constantly self-so and not ordered [to do so]. They do not know the nobleness of themselves. That is why they can be called "profundity" (*xuan* 玄).
 道德之尊貴 何如哉! 而常自然莫之命，不自知其尊且貴者，是以謂之玄也。

Li Zhi suggests his own understanding of **51-[1]** ① - ④. In his commentary, Li reorganizes the original text; ① and ② are understood to connect with ③ and ④ respectively. Thus, Li Zhi understands **51-[1]** as explaining the genesis of all things (*wu*) and tendencies in situations (*shi*), i.e., *Dao* and *de*. If tendencies in situations are formed from virtues of things, it is possible to reason that for Li Zhi virtue, or *de* refers to dispositions of a thing that originates from *Dao*, and that the interplay of various dispositions (*de*-s) produces tendencies in

situations (*shi*). Now we can think that *de* in this case may be understood as the same as “*xing*” (nature) in Cheng-Zhu learning; *xing* is a reified *Dao* in a concrete thing and the pattern of behaviors of the thing. Li Zhi’s understanding of the relationship between *Dao*, *de*, and things (*wu* 物) in the *Laozi* seems to be influenced by Neo-Confucian connection between *li*, *xing* (nature), and things (*qi* 氣 as material force and *qi* 器 as concrete things). Of particular interest is that in his comments on 51-[2], Li Zhi does not use the original phrase, “profound virtue” (*xuande*); instead, he uses just “profundity” (*xuan*). In fact, the meaning of *de* in the case of “profound virtue” is “distinctive effect” or “special power” that exerts influence on both human and all other beings.³⁸⁹ This usage of *de* obviously differs from *de* as nature, or dispositions of a thing. By avoiding the usage of *de* as distinctive effect, Li Zhi appears to focus more on the usage of *de* as nature at least in 51-[2].

B. *Virtue as Effect and Function of the Heart-mind*

The concept of *de* as “distinctive effect” or “special power” is taken into account by Li Zhi in Ch. 10 and 38:

10-[6] *To give birth to and bring up things but not to possess things; to do something but not to presume on it; to raise things but not to preside over things – These are called “the profound virtue” (xuande 玄德).*

生之畜之，生而不有，爲而不恃，長而不宰，是謂“玄德。”

10-[6] It [deserves to] be called [having] “the profound virtue” that one knows (understands) such truth. Generally, [the effect of] the profound virtue is deep and far-reaching. Therefore, [the profound virtue means that one] does not possess things despite giving birth to them, and that one does not presume upon [the ability] despite having the ability, and that one does not master over things despite nurturing them. Ah, it is inestimable!

知此者，是謂玄德。夫玄德深且遠矣。是故可生而不可有，可爲而不可恃，可長而不可宰。嗚呼！盡之矣。(LZJ Ch. 10)

38-[1] *Superior virtue (de) is not virtuous; therefore, it has [the genuine quality of] being virtuous. Inferior virtue tries not to lose [the quality of] being virtuous; therefore, it does*

³⁸⁹ Ivanhoe, “The Concept of *de* (“Virtue”) in the *Laozi*,” in Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip J. Ivanhoe ed., *Religious and philosophical aspects of the Laozi* (Albany: SUNY, 1999), p. 244.

not have [the genuine quality of] being virtuous. Superior virtue takes no action and yet has no deliberation. Inferior virtue takes action, and yet has deliberation. 38-[2] The superior humanity takes action, and yet has no deliberation. 38-[3] Superior righteousness takes action, and yet has no deliberation. Superior propriety takes action, and when people do not respond to it, one will wrench people's arms and force them to respond. 38-[4] Therefore, after Dao is lost, virtue takes place. After virtue is lost, humanity takes place. After humanity is lost, righteousness takes place. After righteousness is lost, propriety takes place. Generally, propriety is [the sign of] superficial (bo 薄) loyalty and trust, and so it is the beginning of disorder. 38-[5] To know things in advance [for control] is the [specious] flowers of Dao (Dao zhi hua 道之華) and the beginning of stupidity. Accordingly, the great gallants dwell in the substantial [genuine virtues] and do not prefer the superficial (bo) [virtues]. [Likewise,] they dwell in the fruit (real contents), and do not prefer the flower (appearance). Therefore they discard those [superficial] and accept these [substantial].

上德不德，是以有德，下德不失德，是以無德，上德無爲而無以爲，下德爲之而有以爲，上仁爲之而無以爲，上義爲之而有以爲，上禮爲之而莫之應，則攘臂而扔之，故失道而後德，失德而後仁，失仁而後義，失義而後禮，夫禮者，忠信之薄，而亂之首，前識者，道之華，而愚之始，是以大丈夫處其厚，不居其薄，處其實，不居其華，故去彼取此。

38-[1] [There is] “no action” (*wuwei* 無爲), and yet “no no action” (*wu wuwei* 無無爲). This is called “superior virtue” (*shangde* 上德), which the Yellow emperor could do. 無爲也，而亦無無爲也，是謂上德，黃帝是也。

38-[2] The next is that although an action is taken, it is actually “no action.” This is called “superior humanity” (*shangren* 上仁), [for example], the humanity of Yao 堯, which was the same as that of Heaven. 其次，雖爲之，而實無爲，是謂上仁，堯之仁如天是也。

38-[3] And then the next is that there are not only actions to be taken but also a *mind* to make something at any price (*biwei zhi xin* 必爲之心). This is “superior righteousness” (*shangyi* 上義), [for examples], the righteousness of such figures as Shun 舜 and Yu 禹. 又其次，不惟爲之，而且有必爲之心，是上義也，舜、禹以下聖人是也。

38-[4] Generally speaking, when *Dao* is lost, virtue (*de*) gets down to discussion; when virtue is lost, humanity gets down to discussion; when humanity is lost, righteousness gets down to discussion. After righteousness is lost, propriety begins to be discussed. [Propriety] is the extreme of what is done in such a way. Accordingly, when there is no response [correspondent to propriety], they wrench people's arms; nevertheless, if there is no response despite the wrench of arms, punishments on people and even war arise consequently. [Propriety] is the beginning of disorder and a sign of the lack of loyalty and trustworthiness.

夫失道而德，失德而仁，失仁而義，至於失義而後禮，則所以爲之者極矣。故爲而不應，則至於攘臂，攘臂不應，則刑罰甲兵相因而起矣。是亂之首，而忠信之薄也。

38-[5] Generally, all these are prescience about the future and **the hindrance of Dao** (*Dao zhi zhang* 道之障). Thus, they are not virtuous. Humanity, righteousness, and propriety are all **the [specious] flowers of Dao** (*Dao zhi hua* 道之華) and the beginning of making people stupid (obscurantism), so that persons who have the true knowledge would not rely on them. Generally speaking, flowers are not [substantial] fruits. Fruits are substantial; flowers are not substantial. How can gallants not know how to stand in with the substantial? If one wants to stand in with the substantial,

she/he ought to discard knowledge and seek wisdom, doing nothing [deliberate], then she/he can get closer to the Great *Dao*.

凡此者, 皆以識智在前, 爲道之障, 不之德也。仁也, 義也, 禮也, 皆道之華, 而愚民之始, 有真智者所不處也。夫華者不實, 實則厚, 華則不厚, 安有大丈夫而不知處厚乎? 欲處厚者, 所當去識求智, 而後無爲, 大道可幾也。 (*LZJ* Ch. 38)

As seen in **10-[6]**, **38-[1]**, and **[5]**, Li Zhi understands *de* as the distinctive effect of a sage; the profound virtue (*xuande*) and superior virtue (*shangde*) are the most distinctive effect or power. If one's "no action" (*wuwei*) can be regarded as a practically effective and powerful action (*wu wuwei* 無無爲), his virtue is the superior virtue that is comparable to the virtue of the Yellow emperor, or the ideal incarnation of *Dao*. Li Zhi's juxtaposition of "*wuwei*" and "*wu-wuwei*" reminds us of the sentence, "*Dao* doesn't do anything and yet leaves nothing undone" (*wuwei er wubuwei* 無爲而無不爲). Despite the similarity in expression and idea, Li Zhi's *wu-wuwei* does not appear to emphasize the enormous practical effect of *wuwei* only, but it seems to call our attention to his caution against the attachment to the idea of *wuwei*, as seen in the case of "True Emptiness" (i.e., a warning against the attachment to the idea of Emptiness or non-being).³⁹⁰ This suggests that the concept of *de* as special power, i.e., the profound virtue and superior virtue may relate to the cultivation of the heart-mind; both attachment to concepts and antidote to such attachment cannot but be a matter of the heart-mind. In conjunction with this, of particular notice is that Li Zhi's discussion from **38-[1]** to **38-[3]** can be understood as an enumeration of superior virtues according the degree of 'intention' or 'consciousness'; in **38-[3]**, Li obviously uses the term, the heart-mind (*xin*) in contrast with "no action" (*wuwei*) of **38-[1]** and **[2]**. Li appears to think that the hierarchy of superiority among moral virtues is determined by various states of the heart-mind; the least function of the heart-mind can guarantee the superior virtue, humanity, and righteousness. In this context, propriety is the worst example because it forces people to act against *Dao* ironically in the

³⁹⁰ Refer to **V-1. The Way and True Emptiness**. (Esp. **1-1**) *C. Dao as non-Dao* & **1-2**) *Dao as True Emptiness beyond being and non-being*)

name of *Dao*. (“*the hindrance of Dao*” and “*the [specious] flower of Dao*”) The point is how one can behave out of spontaneity or naturalness (*ziran*). Spontaneous and natural behaviors are possible only when one acts up to one’s nature (*xing*), and nature can be fully realized by cultivating the heart-mind; when one can cultivate and control her/his heart-mind, she/he can minimize its unnecessary interventions in her/his actions, thereby having spontaneity and naturalness.

At this point, the two different usages of *de* can correlate with each other; *de* as the distinctive effect can be obtained by cultivating *de* as nature. Thus, we may think that in Li Zhi, the gap between *de* as nature and *de* as the distinctive effect can be bridged by virtue of cultivating the heart-mind, i.e., minimizing the function of the heart-mind. As to the cultivation of the heart-mind, Li Zhi’s term, “hindrance of *Dao*” (*Dao zhi zhang*) calls for attention. (38-[5]) Though this term is not used in the original text, Li Zhi introduces it. The term, hindrance of *Dao* is almost the same as “hindrance of *li*” (*lizhang* 理障; the hindrance caused by incorrect views on principle) which originated from the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, or *Yuanjue jing* 圓覺經³⁹¹ and was seriously discussed by Neo-Confucians and Chan (Zen) Buddhists since the Song.³⁹² Wang Yangming too made use of the term:

A disciple asked, “Although recently, my effort in learning seems to have had some basis to begin with, I find it difficult to have a sense of security and joy.” Master Yangming replied, “Rather, you are seeking Heavenly principle (*tianli* 天理) [only] by your *mind* (*xin* 心). This is called **the hindrance of *li*** (*lizhang*). There is a secret in this matter.” The disciple asked, “Could you tell me what it is?” “It is just to extend [your] knowledge,” Yangming said. The disciple asked, “How can I extend [my] knowledge?” Yangming told, “You have [spontaneous] innate knowing (*liangzhi* 良知), which is your own imperative to follow...”

³⁹¹ Wing-tist Chan, *Instructions for Practical living*, p. 193; *Dafangguang Yuanjue jing xiuduohuo liaoyi jing* 大方廣圓覺經修多羅了義經, T.842, Bk.17:916b22.

³⁹² Araki Kengo 荒木見悟, Kim Seok-Keun 김석근 trans., *Bulkyo-wa Yangmyeonghak 불교와 양명학* (Seoul: Seokwangsa, 1993), pp. 64-65. Originally, *Bukyō to Yōmeigaku* 仏教と陽明学, (Tokyo: Daisan bunmeisha, 1979).

問, “近來功夫雖若稍知頭腦, 然難尋個穩當快樂處。” 先生曰, “爾卻去心上尋個天理, 此正所謂理障。此間有個訣竅。” 曰, “請問如何?” 曰, “只是致知。” 曰, “如何致?” 曰, “爾那一點良知, 是爾自家的準則...” (ZXL Case.206)

By using this term, “the hindrance of principle,” Yangming warns his disciple against seeking Heavenly principle (*tianli*) deliberately or only conceptually. (“[only] by your mind”)³⁹³ Here, it can be suggested as the most important task that one prevents the heart-mind from being consciously attached to Heavenly principle. The problem is neither Principle nor the heart-mind *per se* but a temporal state of mind, e.g., the attachment to enlightenment of principle. Thus, the import of the term, “the hindrance of principle” is to keep the heart-mind spontaneous and natural; Yangming suggests that one should turn to her/his “innate knowing” (*liangzhi*) which is the original state of her/his heart-mind (*xin zhi bent* 心之本體).

Likewise, we may understand Li Zhi’s “the hindrance of *Dao*” to warn our mind’s (*xin*) attachment to humanity, righteousness, and propriety in the name of *Dao*. When the heart-mind attains its original state, i.e., “innate knowing” in the words of Yangming, the heart-mind gets ideally suited to the pursuit of *Dao* or *li* and no longer understood as intentions or deliberation that cause artificial actions; rather, the heart-mind in its original state (i.e., innate knowing) becomes something that guarantees natural actions, i.e., *ziran* and *wuwei*. Thus, the term, “the hindrance of *Dao*” can be understood to emphasize, *Dao*’s being neither good nor

³⁹³ As Araki points out, Cheng Yichuan was critical to the import of the term, *lizhang*:

Someone asked [Master Yichuan] about the theory of hindrance of *li* in Buddhism. Yichuan replied, “Buddhism has that theory indeed; it says that it becomes the hindrance if one illuminate *li* and holds on to *li*. But that theory is based on a wrong view on the term, *li*. There is only one *li* in the world. Once we are clear about this *li*, how can it be a hindrance? If [one holds that] *li* becomes a hindrance, [it means that] one’s self and *li* become two.”

問釋氏理障之說。曰, “釋氏有此說, 謂既明此理, 而又執持是理, 故為障。此錯看了理字也。天下只有一箇理, 既明此理, 夫復何障? 若以理為障, 則是己與理為二。”

(Yichuan xiansheng yu 伊川先生語 4, *Henan Chengshi yishu* 河南程氏遺書, *juan* 18; *Erchengji*, volume 1, p. 198)

evil and the heart-mind in its original state,³⁹⁴ just as the hindrance of *li* can be translated as so.³⁹⁵

2-2) *Heart-mind as the ultimate reality*

A. *Vacuity, Non-being, and Heart-mind*

As is discussed presently, the concept of the heart-mind functions as the underlying key concept in Li Zhi's understanding of the *Laozi*; virtue as the distinctive effect or special power can be obtained through the cultivation of the heart-mind, and insofar as the effect or power of *de* is ensured ultimately by its relation with *Dao*, the heart-mind in its original, ideal state can be considered to form a tight relationship with *Dao*. Ch. 16 recounts this aspect of the heart-mind:

16-[1] *Extend vacuity to the ultimate (zhixuji 致虛極) and secure stillness steadfast (shoujingdu 守靜篤).* **16-[2]** *All myriad things take place, from which I observe their return. Generally, even if all things flourish, each and every thing returns to its root (guigen 歸根). "Return to its root" refers to "stillness"(jing 靜). It is called "Returning to its destiny" (fuming 復命).* **16-[3]** *"Returning to destiny" refers to "constancy" (chang 常). "To understand constancy" refers to "brightness" (ming 明). If one does not understand constancy of [Dao], delusions arise, resulting in misfortunes. To understand the constancy refers to "receptiveness" (rong 容). "Receptiveness" is followed by "impartiality" (gong 公; universality). "Impartiality" is followed by "kingliness" (wang 王). "Kingliness" is followed by "Heavenliness" (tian 天; naturalness). "Heavenliness" is followed by "Dao." "Dao" is followed by "eternity" (jiu 久). Then such a person is not in danger till his death.* 致虛極, 守靜篤。萬物竝作, 吾以觀其復。夫物芸芸, 各復歸其根。歸根曰靜, 是謂復命。復命曰常, 知常曰明。不知常, 妄作凶。知常容, 容乃公, 公乃王, 王乃天, 天乃道, 道乃久, 沒身不殆。

16-[1] Vacuity (non-being) is the constant [characteristic] of *Dao*; Stillness is the root (fundamental) [feature] of *Dao*. That is why learners cherish vacuity and stillness. However, there has not been a person who is neither complete nor steadfast in [attempting to] attain complete vacuity and secure stillness but has [the qualities of] vacuity and stillness.

³⁹⁴ This relates to the Four Maxim, in which the original state of the heart-mind is explained as neither good nor evil. Refer to the previous chapter, especially 3-1) *Daoism as the intersection of Buddhism and Confucianism*.

³⁹⁵ Refer to Mizoguchi Yūzō, *ibid.*, p. 45. He holds that the import of "hindrance of *li*" is interchangeable with the thesis of "neither good nor evil."

虛者, 道之常; 靜者, 道之根. 學者所以貴於虛靜也. 然致虛守靜, 而不極不篤, 則猶有虛靜者在, 未也.

16-[2] Only after one attains to the ultimate of vacuity (*xuji* 虛極) and the steadfastness of stillness, she/he can observe that all things that take place return to their, and understand that all things come into being from non-being. And if one can understand that all things that come into being through activity are supposed to return to the root and become still, then she/he can understand that all things vanish into non-being from being.

惟至虛極靜篤, 然後即萬物之竝作, 而能觀萬物之復命, 則凡物之自無而有者, 可知也. 又能知夫藝藝而生者, 仍復歸根而靜, 則凡物之自有而無者, 可知也.

16-[3] Generally, stillness is that which one's destiny (*ming* 命) heads for (returns to) and that from which the constant *Dao* originates. The one who knows this [truth] can illuminate *Dao* and make stillness steadfast, so that one can luster. And the one who knows this can receive all myriad things and embrace all of them in her/his self (*wo* 我; *I*). [*Mencius* 7A:4] Thus, she/he can be fair, kingly, and heavenly, and [these virtues] are all what are necessarily achieved by a person who can receive all myriad things and the natural effects that are possessed by a person who illuminates *Dao*. How can this [talk] be [regarded as] unusual? Accordingly, *Dao* comes out of her/his self. Thus, we cannot express [this truth] enough only by the word, "Heaven" (*tian* 天), and [the one who understands this truth] cannot but be long-lasting and stable! This is the ultimate level of vacuity and stillness.

蓋靜者命之所以復, 而常道之所自出也. 知此者, 是為明道靜極而光生矣; 知此者, 則能有容萬物皆備於我矣. 由此而公、而王、而天, 皆容物者之所必至, 而明道者自然之驗也. 何足怪歟! 由此而道自我出, 則天且不足言矣, 不亦久且安歟! 此虛靜之極致也. (*LZJ* Ch. 16)

In **16-[3]**, Li Zhi says that when one can understand “stillness” as the last destination of all myriad things and the origin of the constant *Dao*, her/his self (“*I*”) can embrace all myriad things including such special virtues as fairness, kingliness, and heavenliness, and that *Dao* comes out of her/his self. The concept of *Dao* here has the qualities of both transcendence and immanence, and the “self” is understood to be able to illuminate and produce such *Dao*. This understanding of the relationship among the heart-mind, self, and *Dao* and the quotation from the *Mencius* 7A:4 (**16-[3]**) reveal that Li Zhi undoubtedly applies the Mencian notion of the heart-mind (particularly seen in the *Mencius* 7A:1, 3, and 4) to his interpretation of the *Laozi*. For Mencius the heart-mind is the beginning point from which one can understand

“nature” (*xing*) and “Heaven” (*tian*) as the ultimate reality. (*Mencius* 7A:1),³⁹⁶ in other words, by introspecting one’s heart-mind, she/he can understand her/his nature, and thereby attains to the origin of her/his nature, i.e., the ultimate reality, Heaven. Thus, when Mencius says that what one can always successfully gain is what is within the “self” (*Mencius* 7A:3), and that all myriad things are already there in the “self” (*Mencius* 7A:4). In Mencian contexts, the “self” refers mainly to the heart-mind (and nature). In fact, Yangming holds;

In its capacity as the master of the body, it is called the heart-mind. Basically, the original state of the heart-mind is none other than **Heavenly principle** (*tianli* 天理), and is never out of accord with propriety. This is your **true self** (*zhenji* 真己).
以其主宰一身，故謂之心。這心之本體，原只是個天理，原無非禮，這個便是汝之真己。
(*ZXL* Case. 122)³⁹⁷

In this context, it is reasonable to think that what Li Zhi means by “self” (*wo*, I) in 16-[3] is the heart-mind, as held by Mencius and Yangming. However, it needs to be discussed that in his understanding of Ch. 16, Li Zhi associates the concept of “self,” i.e., the heart-mind closely with “vacuity” (*xu* 虛; non-being), “stillness” (*jing* 靜), and “*Dao*.” The maximal realization of self is possible when one understands vacuity and stillness – the constant and fundamental characteristics of *Dao*. But in order to understand the vacuity and stillness of *Dao*, one should introspect one’s self. This is why Li Zhi says, “*Dao* comes out of **her/his self**.” (16-[3]) In this way of thinking, the concepts of self and the heart-mind can be elevated to the position of the ultimate reality. At this point, we need to take a look at the background of Li’s understanding of the concept of the heart-mind, i.e., Yangming learning:

Master Yangming said, “Immortality seekers (*xianjia* 仙家) have reached the conclusion of vacuity (*xu* 虛) [of the heart-mind]. How is the sage able to add an iota of reality to that vacuity? The Buddhists have reached the conclusion of non-being (*wu* 無) [of the heart-mind]. How is the sage able to add an iota of being to that non-being?

³⁹⁶ “He who exhaustively studies his heart-mind can understand his nature. He who understands his nature can understand Heaven. To preserve one’s heart-mind and to nourish one’s nature are that by which one serves Heaven.” (孟子曰，“盡其心者，知其性也。知其性，則知天矣。存其心，養其性，所以事天也。”)

³⁹⁷ The above translation is adapted from Wing-tist Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

But the immortality seekers' discussion about vacuity is motivated by a desire for "nourishing life" (*yangsheng* 養生), and the Buddhist discussion about non-being is motivated by the desire to escape from the sorrowful sea of life and death. If a [ulterior] deliberation was added on the original state (*benti* 本體) [of the heart-mind], it would not be the true character of vacuity and non-being, and the original state [of the heart-mind] would get obstructed. The sage merely returns to the true condition of "innate knowing" (*liangzhi*) and does not attach any selfish idea to it. The vacuity of innate knowing is the Great Vacuity (*taixu* 太虛) of Heaven (the cosmos). The non-being of innate knowing is the formlessness (*wuxing*) of the Great Vacuity. Sun, moon, wind, thunder, mountains, rivers, people, and things, and all things that have figure, form, or color function and operate within this formlessness of the Great Vacuity. None of them has become an obstacle to Heaven (the cosmos). The sage just follows the function and operation of his innate knowing, and Heaven, Earth, and all myriad things are contained in the function and flux of our innate knowing. How can there be anything to transcend and obstruct innate knowing?"³⁹⁸

先生曰,“仙家說到虛,聖人豈能虛上加得一毫實?佛氏說到無,聖人豈能無上加得一毫有?但仙家說虛,從養生上來;佛氏說無,從出離生死苦海上來;卻於本體上加卻這些子意思在,便不是他虛無的本色了,便於本體有障礙。聖人只是還他良知的本色,更不著些子意在。良知之虛,便是天之太虛;良知之無,便是太虛之無形。日月風雷山川民物,凡有貌象形色,皆在太虛無形中發用流行,未嘗作得天的障礙。聖人只是順其良知之發用,天地萬物,俱在我良知的發用流行中,何嘗又有一物超於良知之外,能作得障礙?” (ZXL Case. 269)

Yangming clarifies that innate knowing, i.e., the original state of the heart-mind is vacuous (non-being) and identical with the Great Vacuity, the ultimate reality and totality of the universe;³⁹⁹ thus, as the Great Vacuity does so, innate knowing encompasses all myriad things. The *Mencius* 7A:4 holds that one's self, or the heart-mind can contain all myriad things; on the other hand, Yangming says that innate knowing as the Great Vacuity, contains Heaven-and-Earth and all myriad things. Despite Yangming's inheritance of Mencian thought on the heart-mind, the difference between them is that Yangming introduces the concepts of the vacuity and non-being to his understanding of the concept of the heart-mind, i.e., innate

³⁹⁸ Translation is adapted from Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

³⁹⁹ The Great Vacuity is a favorite term of Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-77, styled Hengqu 橫渠). According to him, the Great Vacuity is the "original state (substance) of *qi* (*qi zhi bentu* 氣之本體)." (Refer to Zhang Zai, *Zhengmeng* 正蒙 Ch.1 Taihe 太和; Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 501) In this case, such *qi* is universal to everything, and thereby practically not different from the universal *li* (*liyi* 理一).

knowing.⁴⁰⁰ It is evident that Li Zhi applies Yangming's notion of the heart-mind to his understanding of the *Laozi* Ch. 16, although Yangming criticizes Daoist and Buddhist concepts of the vacuity and non-being. In Ch. 5, Li Zhi discusses that the vacuity (*xu*) as the ultimate reality or totality becomes the center of everything:

5-[1] *Heaven and Earth are not humane (ren 仁). They regard all things as straw dogs. Sages are not humane. He regards all people as straw dogs.* 5-[2] *The space between Heaven and Earth is like bellows and pipe! Vacuous but inexhaustible [is it] and [the more] it moves, the more it produces.* 5-[3] *Verbosity to cause a predicament is not better than securing the center (zhong 中).*

天地不仁，以萬物爲芻狗；聖人不仁，以百姓爲芻狗。天地之間，其猶橐籥乎！虛而不屈，動而愈出，多言數窮，不如守中。

5-[1] If Heaven and Earth could be humane to all myriad things, what will Heaven and Earth be humane [specifically] to? If sages could be humane to all people, whom will sages be humane [specifically] to?

使天地而能仁萬物，則天地將誰與仁？使聖人而能仁萬民，則聖人將誰與仁？

5-[2] [People] do not know that in the in-between space of Heaven and Earth there are a bellows and a pipe, and that even in the case of Heaven and Earth or sages, they are also born and die in the center [of the in-between space]; nevertheless, people do not know it by themselves. Why? Bellows and pipes whose centers are vacuous are able to respond well. They cannot be exhausted though they are shaken. The more they move, the more they produce. Thus, they cannot be exhaustively probed into. Although the wise men want to exhaustively explain it, how can they succeed in doing so? Therefore, if one knew that Heaven and Earth and all myriad things shared one center, she/he would come to know that all myriad things did not have anything to seek from Heaven and Earth, and that Heaven and Earth could not endow all myriad things with anything. [By the same token, if one knew that] sages and ten thousands people shared one center, [she/he would come to know that] the sages did not have a mind to take into consideration people, and that ten thousand people too do not have anything to rely on sages for.

不知橐籥之在天地間，雖天地聖人，亦皆生死其中，而不自知也。何也？虛中而善應，不可得而搖屈也。動之而愈出，不可得而窮探也。雖有智者，而欲以言窮之，胡可得耶！故

⁴⁰⁰ Although the Cheng-Zhu learning too inherited and developed the thought of Mencius, the notion of the heart-mind in Yangming learning is different from that in Cheng-Zhu learning, albeit not totally different; Zhu Xi explains the heart-mind as *qi* in a tight connection with *li*, and thereby holds that the heart-mind contains and controls both nature and emotions (*xin tong xing qing* 心統性情). Zhu regards the heart-mind as including various states which may be sometimes good or evil because emotions are the results caused together by various *qi*-states and *li* (nature). On the other hand, Yangming defines the heart-mind as innate knowing (*liangzhi*), nature, and *li*. This means that Yangming extends the range of the heart-mind into the metaphysical reality. Even if Yangming can draw on *qi* to explain the heart-mind, it should be the ideal, original state of *qi* rather than various *qi* states. This is attested to by Yangming's comparison of innate knowing to the Great Vacuity.

知天地與萬物同一中也, 萬物無所求於天地, 天地自不能施於萬物; 聖人與萬民同一中也, 聖人無容心於萬民, 萬民亦自無所藉於聖人。

5-[3] When each and every thing and person secure their own center (*geshou wu zhi zhong* 各守吾之中), they can expect to be stabilized of themselves (*ziding* 自定). How can they secure their center? I would say that the stupid can make (secure) it but the wise cannot; the incredulous can make it, but the humane lose it instead. Ah, how can we easily explain this!

各守吾之中, 以待其自定而已矣。守之如何? 曰, 愚者得之, 而智者昧焉; 不信者得之, 而仁者反失之也。嗚呼! 是豈可以易言乎哉! (**LZJ** Ch. 5)

Li Zhi explains that the in-between space of Heaven and Earth is the common center (*zhong*) of Heaven and Earth (nature), sages, and all myriad things (**5-[2]**) and that if one secures the center of her/his self (*geshou wu zhi zhong*), her/his self is automatically stabilized (*ziding* 自定). (**5-[3]**) Thus, it is obvious that the common center becomes the center of each and every thing, and the full realization of one's center ensures full conformity to the fundamentals of "life and death," i.e., the principle of the universe. (**5-[2]**)

Li Zhi's understanding of the empty center of both Heaven and Earth and all things, i.e., vacuity can be interpreted to draw on the concept of "innate knowing" (*linagzhi*), or the heart-mind in Yangming learning, for these reasons;

First of all, Yangming explains that innate knowing, i.e., the heart-mind does not have a physical substance (*wuti* 無體) as material beings do.⁴⁰¹ Such terms as vacuity and non-being encapsulate one important characteristic of innate knowing, so that these terms may be substitutively used for one another according to contexts. Hence, for Li Zhi it would not be

⁴⁰¹ Besides **ZXL** Case.269 in the above, there is another representative passage about this:

Master Yangming said, "The eye (seeing) does not have the contents (*ti* 體; body or substance as material) of its own. It takes the color of all things as its contents. The ear (hearing) does not have the contents of its own. It takes the sounds of all things as its contents. The nose (smelling) does not have the contents of its own. It takes the odors of all things as its contents. The mouth (eating) does not have the contents of its own. It takes all tastes of all things as its contents. The heart-mind does not have the contents of its own. It takes as its contents the right or wrong after the feelings and responses of Heaven and Earth and all myriad things."

目無體, 以萬物之色為體; 耳無體, 以萬物之聲為體; 鼻無體, 以萬物之臭為體; 口無體, 以萬物之味為體; 心無體, 以天地萬物感應之是非為體。

(**ZXL** Case.277; Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, p. 223; Julia Ching, *ibid.*, p. 138)

unusual that “the empty center” and “vacuity” are used in the way in which audience is reminded of the concept of the heart-mind, or innate knowing in Yangming learning;

Second, Yangming argues that innate knowing exists in both sentient and non-sentient-beings, and that the innate knowing of one’s self or any other beings is none other than the innate knowing of the universe, i.e., *Dao* or Heavenly principle. In line with this relationship between vacuity and innate knowing, i.e., the heart-mind in Yangming learning, Li Zhi understands the empty center (or vacuity) in the *Laozi* as both the heart-mind of the universe and that of an individual;

Lastly, based on the above ideas, Yangming holds that once one can “secure” her/his heart-mind, or innate knowing, she/he can naturally attain to the innate knowing of the universe, and that innate knowing, or the heart-mind as Heavenly principle is also the principle of life (*shengli* 生理).⁴⁰² From this Li Zhi must have drawn his explanation of the center of Heaven and Earth as the fundamentals of life and death.

B. Securing/Embracing oneness and the Heart-mind

What needs more discussion at this point is the heart-mind (self) as the way of “oneness,” i.e., unity. Li Zhi holds that “self,” i.e., the heart-mind as *Dao* contains all myriad things and even *Dao* comes out of *self* (*LZJ* Ch. 16), and that one should “secure” the “empty center” and “vacuity,” or the heart-mind as *Dao*, which embraces and penetrates both Heaven and Earth and people including sages. (*LZJ* Ch. 16) As will be presently discussed, Li Zhi

⁴⁰² “What is called your heart-mind is not merely that lump of blood and flesh. If were so, why is it that the dead man, whose lump of lump of blood and flesh is still present, cannot see, listen, speak, or move? What is called your heart-mind is that which makes your seeing, listening, speaking, and moving possible. It is the nature (*xing*) [of human and things] and Heavenly *li* (*tianli*). Only with this nature can there be the principle of life (*shengli* 生理), which is called humanity or seed (*ren* 仁). . .” (所謂汝心, 亦不專是那一團血肉. 若是那一團血肉, 如今已死的人, 那一團血肉還在, 緣何不能視聽言動? 所謂汝心, 卻是那能視聽言動的, 這個便是性, 便是天理. 有這個性, 才能生這性之生理, 便謂之仁.) (*ZXL* Case.122; Wing-tsit Chan, *ibid.*, p. 80)

thinks that in the *Laozi*, the idea of unity is expressed as “the One” (yi 一) as *Dao*. Ch. 39 of the *Laozi jie* shows well Li Zhi’s focal point in his interpretation of “the One”:

[There were] those that attained the One in ancient times: Heaven attained the One, and thereby became clear; Earth attained the One, and thereby became still. The numinous attained the One, and thereby became spiritual. The valley attained the One, and thereby became filled. All myriad things attained the One, and thereby take place. Kings attained the One, and thereby pacify the world. When such things extended the One, if Heaven does not draw on clarity [caused by the One], Heaven will crack; if Earth does not draw on stillness, Earth will erupt; if the numinous does not draw on spirituality [caused by the One], they will stop being numinous; if the valley does not draw on fullness [caused by the One], it will become exhausted; if all myriad things do not have productions [caused by the One], they will become extinct; if kings do not draw on nobility and highness, they will fall down. Therefore humbleness is the root of nobleness. Lowliness is the basis of highness. Accordingly, kings [humbly] call themselves the orphaned, the lonely, and the unworthy. Doesn’t this take humbleness as the root of nobleness? Isn’t it so? Therefore if we focused on and counted [every part of] a chariot, we could not have [a whole] chariot. Thus, we neither want to jingle like beads of jade nor to rumble like rocks.

昔之得一者，天得一以清，地得一以寧，神得一以靈，谷得一以盈，萬物得一以生，侯王得一以爲天下貞，其致之，天無以清，將恐裂，地無以寧，將恐發，神無以靈，將恐歇，谷無以盈，將恐竭，萬物無以生，將恐滅，侯王無以貴高，將恐蹶，故貴以賤爲本，高以下爲基，是以侯王自謂孤，寡，不穀，此非以賤爲本邪，非乎？故致數車，無車，不欲碌碌如玉，珞珞如石。

Kings and nobles do not understand (know) *the Dao of reaching unity* (zhiyi zhi dao 致一之道) that they are *on a parity (equality) with the common people* (yu shuren tongdeng 與庶人同等); thus, they cannot help making themselves as higher by regarding themselves nobler. [However,] such highness cannot but [eventually] topple because the lowly are the basis [of the higher], and such nobility cannot but [eventually] topple down because the humble are the basis [of the noble]. Why is it so? Given *the principle of reaching unity* (zhiyi zhi li 致一之理), the common people are not lowly, and kings and nobles are not higher; the common people can be said to be noble and nobles, and kings can be said to be lowly. [However,] they do not understand this [principle]. Today generally, wheels, spokes, canopy, the cross board of a carriage, major axles, yokes, hubs, minor axles, and the like altogether constitute a [complete] chariot. But if people only see these many [individual] parts, how can they ever know there are [complete sets of] chariots? However, we [collectively] call them a chariot, not [discrete] wheels, spokes, canopy, the cross board of a carriage, major axles, yokes, hubs, minor axles, and the like. Judging from this, we can understand [the meanings of] high and lowly, and noble and humble. People see that there are nobility, humbleness, highness, and lowliness, but do not know that all those [parts] will *reach (constitute) unity* (zhi zhi yi 致之一). Then how can they possess so-called highness/lowliness and nobleness/humbleness [simultaneously]? If people are noble, they are incapable of humbleness, and if they are humble, they are incapable of nobleness. [This is] to rely on one’s own opinion [only], thereby being incapable of *reaching unity*. This is also like the jingling of jade or rumbling of rocks.

侯王不知致一之道，與庶人同等，故不免以貴自高。高者必蹶，下其基也；貴者必蹶，賤其本也。何也？致一之理，庶人非下，侯王非高。在庶人可言貴，在侯王可言賤，特未知之耳。今夫輪、輻、蓋、軫、衡、輓(輓)、轂、轡，會而成車，人但見有此數者，曷嘗有車哉！然而名之曰車，而不曰輪、輻、蓋、軾、衡、輓、轂、轡也。由此觀之，則所

謂高下、貴賤者可知矣。人見其有貴、有賤、有高、有下,而不知其致之一也,曷嘗有所謂高下、貴賤者哉!彼貴而不能賤,賤而不能貴。據吾所見,而不能致之一也。則亦碌碌落落,如玉如石而已矣。(LZJ Ch. 39)

As seen in the above, Li Zhi interprets “attaining the One” (*deyi* 得一) as “Understanding the *Dao* (*li*) of reaching unity” (*zhi zhiyi zhi Dao* (*li*) 知致一之道 (理)), and focuses on the socio-political implication; no society can be maintained only by the ruling class because governance cannot be executed without the common people’s economic and political collaboration. Hence, the ruling (“noble” and “high”) class should not regard itself as unconditionally nobler and higher than the common people (*shuren* 庶人). Li Zhi, however, clarifies that to reverse the social hierarchy is not the import of the *Laozi*; rather, it is necessary to recognize all the classes as serving the society in their positions, on parity with each other. In other words, “the One” is understood as the unity (oneness) of all the classes without bias. Li Zhi understands the example of a “chariot” (*che* 車) as supporting his interpretation of the One; all parts of a chariot are understood to collaboratively constitute a complete car. It is pointless to discriminate more important parts from less important parts in observing a chariot; they are altogether conducive to making a complete car. Obviously Li Zhi’s understanding of “the One” as oneness (unity) is supported by the aforementioned idea of taking the whole reality as it is, i.e., the attitude of *ziran* and *wuwei*, which begins with the awareness of the “mutual formation by binary pairs” (*liangliang xiangxing* 兩兩相形) and “interdependence” (*xiangdai* 相待; correlativity) of opposites. (LZJ Ch. 2)

In Ch. 10 of the *Laozi jie*, Li Zhi clarifies his understanding of the One, i.e., the *Dao* (*li*) of reaching unity, suggesting that the key to oneness is the cultivation of the heart-mind:

10-[1] *Can you carry and manage the somatic [on the psyche] and embrace oneness lest you should separate from them?* **10-[2]** *Can you concentrate qi, thereby achieving malleableness like a baby?* **10-[3]** *Can you wipe out the profound mirror so as to have no dust on it?* **10-[4]** *Can you minister to people and govern the country without doing anything [deliberate]?* **10-[5]** *Can you act like a female in the opening and closing of the Heavenly gate?* **10-[6]** *Can you possess knowledge-less knowledge by which to brilliantly penetrate all things thoroughly?* **10-[7]** *To give birth to and bring up things but not to*

possess things; to do something but not to presume on it; to raise things but not to preside over things – This is called “profound virtue” (xuande 玄德).

載營魄抱一，能無離乎？專氣致柔，能嬰兒乎？滌除玄覽，能無疵乎？愛民治國，能無知乎？天門開闔，能無雌乎？明白四達，能無知乎？生之畜之，生而不有，爲而不恃，長而不宰，是謂“玄德。”

10-[1] People know that the somatic spirit (*po* 魄) can carry (contains) **the psyche** (*shen* 神),⁴⁰³ but do not know that the psyche can also carry the somatic spirit. It is **the psyche** that carries the somatic spirit. [But] it is not **the psyche** that [tries to] manage and guard (*ying* 營; *yingwei* 營衛) the somatic spirit [so as to] carry [the somatic spirit]. Accordingly, [the somatic spirit and the psyche constitute] just **the unified psyche** (*yishen* 一神). If one **embraces the origin and secures oneness** (*baoyuan shouyi* 抱元守一), **the psyche** and the somatic spirit naturally become inseparable from each other, which results from understanding **the psyche**. “*Ying* 營” means ‘managing and guarding’ (*yingwei* 營衛).⁴⁰⁴

人知魄之載神，而不知神之載魄。載魄則神，營魄載之則不神。然則一神焉耳矣。抱元守一，則神魄自不相離，而亦庶乎知神之爲矣。營，營衛也。

10-[2] Generally, infants are completely ignorant, but their *qi* is the best concentrated [*qi*]; they are not able to do anything at all, but their *qi* is most flexible [in developing into all kinds of abilities]. If one is able to emulate infants in concentrating *qi* and maximizing the flexibility of *qi*, she/he will be able to **embrace oneness**.

夫嬰兒，百無一知也，而其氣至專；百無一能也，而其氣至柔。專氣致柔，能如嬰兒，則可爲抱一矣。

10-[3] If blemish and spots [in the profound mirror] are not cleaned, the gate of profundity (*xuanguan* 玄關) is not opened [to her/him]. If the gate of profundity is not opened, the physical disposition [of her/him] sticks up. If one is able to be spotless in cleaning up the profound mirror, she/he is able to **embrace oneness**.

⁴⁰³ As to the reason for this translation, refer to the next footnote.

⁴⁰⁴ “*Ying* 營” and “*po* 魄” are generally understood as “*hun* 魂” and “*po* 魄,” respectively. Heshang gong explains that *hun* and *po* reside in the liver (*gan* 肝) and the lung (*fei* 肺), respectively. This suggests that Heshang gong regards both *hun* and *po* as something without a material shape. (Refer to Heshang gong’s *Zhangju*, Ch. 10, p. 34; Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Laozi zhushi ji pingjie* 老子註釋及評介 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 97.) But the meaning of *hun* and of *po* are not crystal-clear; as Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之 shows, there are many usages of the terms. However, generally, *hun* and *po* are understood as constituting a pair; for example, *hun-and-po* stands for *yang-and-yin*, *qi* or the essence of *qi* (*jing* 精)-and-shape (*xing* 形), and the *yang* numinous force (*yangshen* 陽神)-and-the *yin* numinous force (*yinshen* 陰神). (Refer to *Laozi jiaoshi* 老子校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), pp. 38-39.) As seen, Li Zhi interprets *ying* 營 as “manage and guard,” not as *hun*; nevertheless, by introducing the concept of *shen*, Li Zhi sets a pair consisting of *shen* and *po*. As seen in **10-[6]**, *shen* is spirituality and empty of matter. This is why I used the term, “*psyche*” for *shen*. Accordingly, *po* can be interpreted as the somatic (physical) aspect of spirit which is the most universal meaning of *po*. This juxtaposition by Li Zhi seems to be based on the Neo-Confucian concept of *guishén* 鬼神, which consists of *yin* and *yang*. In other words, *gui* is *yin* and also means ‘return’ (*gui* 歸); on the other hand, *shén* is *yang* and also means ‘pliancy’ (*shēn* 伸). In this case, *shen* can be associated with *hun*.

瑕疵未滌, 則玄關不開. 玄關不開, 則形質留闔. 滌除玄覽, 而能無疵, 則可爲抱一矣.

- 10-[4] If ministering to [the common] people and governing the country did not [draw on] *the psyche*, no one would be able to practice *wuwei* in ministering to people and governing the country. Accordingly, the one who knows how to embrace oneness does not want to distract her/his [focused] heart-mind in ministering to people. The one who makes a [deliberate] effort to minister people can hardly avoid governing the country by laboring *the psyche*. This is the way to get separated into two, [not the way to embrace oneness], and thus how can she/he *embrace oneness* and make it inseparable [from the heart-mind]?

愛民治國, 非神, 其誰爲之而不能以無爲也. 故知抱一者, 不欲分心以愛民; 務愛民者, 不免役神以治國. 是二之也, 安能抱一而無離乎?

- 10-[5] If *the psyche* does not exist when Heavenly door opens and closes, what can take control [of Heavenly door's opening and closing]? – [Heavenly door's opening and closing] cannot be controlled autonomously [without the psyche]. Accordingly, [if one did not understand the psyche properly,] she/he would bother to act in the opening of Heavenly door, which is to make a voluntary move without waiting for others' order; on the other hand, she/he would pull back in the closing of Heavenly door. [Thus, in this case,] one cannot help having [many] jobs to do, nor have constant stability. These are all [because of] her/his *inner immoderation*. Thus, how can she/he *embraces oneness* and make it inseparable? This is exactly because she/he does not understand what is done by *the psyche*.

天門開闔, 非神, 其誰主之而不能以自主也. 故有開則將, 不待迫之而自起; 有闔則逆, 不能無事而常定. 是內淫也, 安能抱一而無離乎? 此無他, 皆起於不知神之所爲故也.

- 10-[6] Generally, *the psyche* is “the Ultimate Vacuity” (*zhixu* 至虛). If it is vacuous, then it can be naturally crystal-clear [about everything], and *the psyche* is “the Ultimate Spirituality” (*zhiling* 至靈). If it is spiritual, then it can be naturally prevalent in all directions. Who can escape from *the psyche*? Only persons who have this knowledge [about the psyche] can reach [the realm of] “no [artificial, assertive, or principled] knowledge” (*wuzhi* 無知). When one has “no knowledge,” she/he can be regarded as knowing (understanding) [the truth]. If one has [artificial or assertive] knowledge, her/his soma loads (presides over) *the psyche*; if one has no [artificial or assertive] knowledge, *the psyche* loads (presides over) the soma. If *the psyche* loads the soma, it is called ‘oneness (unity)’; if the soma loads *the psyche*, it is called ‘two (separated).’ Hence, [we can say that we] should not have [artificial or assertive] knowledge and that we should not be ignorant of [the truth about the psyche or oneness].

夫神, 至虛也, 虛則自然明白; 神, 至靈也, 靈則自然四達. 而其誰能離之? 然惟其有知也, 是以無知, 能無知, 斯知之矣. 有知, 則魄載神; 無知, 則神載魄. 神載魄則一, 魄載神則二, 故不可以有知也, 又不可以不知也.

- 10-[7] It is called “the profound virtue” that one understands such truth. Generally, the profound virtue is deep and far-reaching. Therefore, [the profound virtue means that one] does not possess things despite giving birth to them, and that one does not presume upon [the ability] despite having the ability, and that one does not master over things despite nurturing them. Ah, it is inestimable!

知此者, 是謂玄德. 夫玄德深且遠矣. 是故可生而不可有, 可爲而不可恃, 可長而不可宰. 嗚呼! 盡之矣.

As seen in **10-[1]** to **[6]**, Li Zhi consistently applies the concept of “embracing oneness” (*baoyi*) and “the psyche” (*shen* 神) to each sentence of Ch. 10, and understands the psyche as the key to embracing oneness. In **10-[1]**, oneness is defined as the unity of the soma and the psyche, and the concept of the psyche is elevated to “*the unified psyche*” (*yishen*), which embraces the concept of the soma. Thus, the psyche in an individual can be construed as the inner principle for the integrity of the individual. On the other hand, in **10-[5]**, the psyche is described as the principle of “the opening and closing of the Heavenly door,” which is the principle for the cosmic movement. Thus, the psyche in this case may be rephrased as the cosmic psyche. These two aspects of the psyche suggest that for Li Zhi the psyche is both immanent and transcendent just as Zhu Xi’s *li* (principle) and Wang Yangming’s *xin* (the heart-mind) are so. In **10-[6]**, Li Zhi spells out the relationship between the psyche and *Dao* by saying, “The psyche is the Ultimate Vacuity (*zhixu*)”; since Li says, “Vacuity is the constant characteristic of *Dao*” (Ch. 16, **16-[1]**), the psyche should refer to the the numinous operation of *Dao*. The psyche’s relationship with vacuity and *Dao* is a Daoistic rephrasing of the heart-mind or innate knowing’s relationship with vacuity and principle (*li*) in Yangming learning.⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, the concept of the psyche turns out to closely relate to the concept of the heart-mind in **10-[4]**, **[5]**, and **[6]**. Most of all, **10-[6]** defines the psyche as “the Ultimate Spirituality (*zhiling* 至靈),” and thereby reveals an affinity between the psyche and the heart-mind. And embracing oneness by virtue of understanding the psyche keeps the heart-mind from being “distracted” (**10-[4]**), “immoderate” (**10-[5]**), and “separated” (**10-[6]**). This means that to understand the psyche is to understand the original state of the heart-mind, i.e., the *wuwei* and *ziran* of *Dao*. Indeed for Li Zhi the psyche is also understood as the key to *wuwei* and *wuzhi* (no artificial knowledge). Accordingly, **10-[3]** should mean that one must rid

⁴⁰⁵ For the relationship between the heart-mind, innate knowing, vacuity, and *li* in Yangming learning, refer to the previous section “A. Vacuity, Non-being, and the Heart-mind.” Especially refer to discussions about **LZJ** Ch. 16 and **ZXL** Case. 269.

the heart-mind of immoderation (“*blemish and spots*,” “*clean the profound mirror*”) in order to attain to the original state of the heart-mind, or *Dao*, which is expressed as “profound virtue” in 10-[3].

To sum up, for Li Zhi *Dao/li* of reaching the unity (*zhiyi zhi Dao/li*), i.e., embracing oneness is attained by cultivating the heart-mind (understanding the psyche), and the effect of the cultivation is the *wuwei* and *ziran* (and *wuzhi*) of *Dao*, which is none other than “profound virtue,” i.e., “the virtue of infants” (10-[2]).

3. Heart-mind, Unity of All things, and Ideal Governance

3-1) Cultivation of the Heart-mind and the Political Ideal

This chapter discusses Li Zhi’s socio-political ideal as seen in the *Laozi jie*. As already discussed, Li Zhi suggests that high and low classes should be understood to collaboratively constitute a society; therefore, neither of them should be ignored. (**LZJ** Ch. 39) This is the basic socio-political import of embracing oneness or *Dao* of reaching the unity. And such a view on social classes can be related to the idea of “ministering to [the common] people” (*aimin* 愛民: *lit.* loving people). (**LZJ** Ch. 10) One may think that the term, “ministering to people” is at best a kind of paternalism that is rooted in a monarchic hierarchism, assuming the priority of the higher. However, if the way of ministering to people is *wuwei* and *ziran*, such a charge of paternalism may be reduced. In Ch. 10 (10-[4]), Li Zhi takes this point into account:

Can you minister to people and govern the country without doing anything [deliberate]?

If ministering to [the common] people and governing the country did not [draw on] **the psyche**, no one would be able to practice ‘*wuwei*’ in ministering to people and governing the country. Accordingly, the one who knows how to **embrace oneness** does not want to distract her/his [focused] **heart-mind** in ministering to people. The one who makes a [deliberate] effort to minister people can hardly avoid governing the country by laboring **the psyche**. This is the way to get separated into two, [not the way

to embrace oneness], and thus how can she/he *embrace oneness* and make it inseparable [from the heart-mind]?

Of course, the audience of the above passage is the ruling class rather than the common people. However, Li Zhi holds that the ideal measures to be taken for “ministering to people and governing the country” is *wuwei* and making no effort to minister to people; otherwise, governing the country cannot help but tire one’s psyche. In other words, the ruling class should let people follow their spontaneous (*ziran*) nature through abstention from unnecessary intervention. Of particular interest is that “ministering to people and governing the country” require the cultivation of the heart-mind for ‘single-mindedness’ (“*not want to distract his heart-mind*” [*buyufenxin* 不欲分心]) which is attained by the enlightenment of “the psyche” (*shen*). And Li’s understanding of the psyche and embracing oneness are based on the concept of the cultivation of the heart-mind. In Chs. 3 and 49, Li Zhi elaborates on the cultivation of the heart-mind and its political import:

3-[1] *Don’t revere the worthy lest people compete [with each other for the title of the worthy]. Don’t cherish rare goods lest people steal them. Don’t show what may be desired lest people’s hearts be disturbed. 3-[2] Therefore sages’ ruling empties [people’s] heart-mind yet fills stomach, and weakens the will yet strengthens the bones. 3-[3] Sages’ ruling constantly makes people have neither [artificial] knowledge nor desire, and makes intellectuals not dare to act. If no (deliberate) action could be taken, nothing would be left un-governed.*

不尚賢，使民不爭；不貴難得之貨，使民不爲盜；不見可欲，使民心不亂。是以聖人之治，虛其心，實其腹；弱其志，強其骨。常使民無知無欲，使夫智者不敢爲也。爲無爲，則無不治。

3-[1] Competition is the origin of theft, which sages enlighten people on. People of high caliber compete with others over excellence [i.e., socially recognized goodness]. People of the next caliber compete with others to steal (win) a country. Both arise from seeing what may be desired. If what may be desired are many, people’s *volition* is disturbed. How can we control them then? What kind of action against such a problem can be taken by the highest [ruling] for governance? It should be just not to show [people] what deserves to be coveted.

爭，盜之原，聖人啓之也。故上者爭善，其次盜國，皆起於見可欲焉耳。可欲者衆，則民志亂矣，烏能治乎！太上於此，豈真有以治之哉，亦曰不見可欲而已。

3-[2] Generally, the reason why [we feel that] our stomachs are not filled enough is because our *heart-mind* feels so. If we now did not see anything worth desiring, admiring, and cherishing, our *heart-mind* would be emptied and the *stomach* would be filled. The reason why our bones are not strong is that our *volition* is not controlled well. If we now dare neither do anything immodest and rebellious nor have any goal to

compete for and steal, our *volition* would become obedient and our bones get naturally strong; the reason for this is that we do not have desire [now].

夫腹之所以不充者, 心思之也. 今一不見有可欲、可尚、可貴之事, 則心虛而腹自實矣. 骨之所以不剛者, 志敗之也. 今一不敢爲於悖亂、爭盜之事, 則志弱而骨自強矣. 所以然者, 無欲故也.

3-[3]-Intro. Generally, people are born with desires, but they are just unaware of them.

The so-called sages everyday lead people to obtain knowledge about various things; they display humanity, righteousness, propriety, and music; they guide them with laws and regulations, and prohibition and decrees; they build up palaces and invent clothing, vehicles (*lit.* chariots and horses), and ceremonies for the coming-of-age, marriage, funeral, and ancestor memorial, thereby introducing “limitless knowledge” (*wuya zhi zhi* 無涯之知, *Zhaungzi* 3:1) [accompanied by limitless desire]. But later they try to restrain people from limitless desire, which is analogous to one trying to ward off inundation by using a straw. How can he make it?

夫民生有欲, 無知則已. 聖人者, 又日引之使有知也; 陳之仁義禮樂, 導之法制禁令; 設爲宮室、衣服、車馬、冠婚、喪祭之事, 以啓其無涯之知, 而後節其無窮之欲, 是猶泛濫滔天, 而徐以一葦障之也, 胡可得歟!

3-[3] The highest [ruling] is not so, but it would always let the common people be as confused as the “primitive hodge-podge” (*hunhun dundun* 混混沌沌, *Zhaungzi* 7:7) and have neither knowledge (*wuzhi* 無知) nor desire (*wuyu* 無欲). If smart and learned people are allowed to put their noses and try to achieve something, but they do not want to do so, the world will return to [the ideal state of] “*wuwei*.” Generally, *wuwei* originates from *wuyu*; *wuyu* originates from *wuzhi*. How can a single person make people have *wuzhi* then? I would say that the best [rulers] never have knowledge indeed and that they do not really reveal their capability to govern people, allowing us to go by the [spontaneous] desires of our heart-mind.

太上則不然, 常使民混混沌沌, 無有知也, 無有欲也. 縱有聰明知識者出, 而欲有作爲, 而自不敢, 則天下皆歸於無爲矣. 夫無爲, 由於無欲; 無欲, 由於無知. 夫一人何以能使民之無知哉? 曰, 太上者, 固自謂未嘗有知也, 固不見有可以治乎民者, 而使吾心之欲之也.

On the one hand, the heart-mind in **3-[2]** is explained negatively as the origin of societal problems together with “*what may be desired*”; on the other hand, the heart-mind in **3-[3]** (“*Desires of our heart-mind*”) is positively described as that which the highest ruling has to let blossom. (And the term, “desire” (*yu* 欲) too has both positive and negative usages, as seen in **3-[2]** and **3-[3]** respectively.) This usage of the heart-mind is not a contradiction. Rather, it suggests that Li Zhi regards the heart-mind as the decisive factor of the success of ruling; only when the heart-mind is well cultivated, ideal ruling is guaranteed. In order to make the heart-mind the starting point of the ideal ruling, the heart-mind of people has to be emptied of unnatural desires. In **3-[3]-Intro.**, Li Zhi explains why people came to have its unnatural

desires; the more proliferation and differentiation of social institutions and values come about, the more knowledge and desires take place. Accordingly, knowledge and desire become limitless and out of control. The solution suggested in the *Laozi* is “to empty people’s heart-mind” and “to weaken the volition”; the state of mind attained to by virtue of this solution is “no knowledge” (*wuzhi*) and “no desire” (*wuyu*). Li Zhi goes further to add an insightful expression, the “primitive hodge-podge” (*hunhun dundun*), which is quoted from the *Zhuangzi* 7:7. (3-[3]) This means that Li Zhi understands emptying the heart-mind and weakening the volition as returning the heart-mind to the undifferentiated primitive state of mind. When the heart-mind of people does not consider excessively differentiated social institutions and values to be worth coveting, people’s desires will become simplified and spontaneous so as to be regarded as natural for sustenance. Differently put, only when our heart-mind is properly emptied, our desires can be regarded as worth pursuing.

To summarize Li Zhi’s understanding of the *Laozi* Ch. 3, the ideal ruling empties people’s heart-mind and yet fills their basic physical needs; however, this can be interpreted to cultivate the heart-mind so as to restore the genuine heart-mind and produce justifiable desires. This should be Li Zhi’s understanding of “*If no (deliberate) action could be taken, nothing would be left un-governed.*” (*wei wuwei ze wubuzhi* 爲無爲, 則無不治). At this point, we can consult Li Zhi’s discussion about the ideal *wuwei* politics:

The sagely learning practices *wuwei*, but gets things done (*wuwei er cheng* 無為而成). But now to talk about “*wuwei*” is nothing more than a discussion of “*wuxin* 無心” (no heart-mind). Generally, once we talk about the heart-mind, how can we talk about non-existence (“*wu* 無”) [of the heart-mind]? And once we talk about an action, how can we have an action taken by “no mind (*wuxin*)”? If a farmer does not have “a mind” [to till his field,] his field will certainly run to weeds. If an artisan does not have “a mind” [to work,] his tools will certainly get spoiled. If a scholar does not have “a mind” [to study,] his task will certainly be left undone. How can we [get things done] without “a mind [to do our jobs]”? Some interpreter explains, “What is called no heart-mind means that one has no selfishness (*wusi* 無私), not that one does not have the genuine heart-mind (*zhenxin* 真心).” [However], generally speaking, “selfishness” is “a [natural] human heart-mind.” Only after there is selfishness, there can be shown a human heart-mind. If there was no selfishness, there would not be the heart-mind [on the whole]. For example, in the case of cultivating a field, after there is some

self-interest to obtain the autumn's harvest, people would go to the "effort of working the field." In the case of household economy, after there is the self-interest to gain by "storing things up," people will go to the effort of husbandry. In the case of learning, after there is the desire for self-advancement, people will undertake to prepare for examinations. Thus, if the emoluments of office were not given officers, no one would be responsive to an invitation to serve. If no high rank was given officers, no amount of exhortation could persuade people to come forth and serve. And even in the case of a sage like Confucius, if there had not been the office of Minister of Justice by which he shared in the business of governing, he certainly would not have found even a day of service in the state of Lu tolerable. This is a natural principle, to which practice must conform. This talk is not just imaginary and groundless speculation. If this is the case, the [interpretation of *wuwei* as] "no selfishness" should be just an airy talk and [dwarf] voyeur's speculation. However, it sounds good but is totally irrelevant to [our concern for discerning] practicality and hollowness, and thereby useless to [practical] affairs. It is just disturbing the [right] Way; therefore, it doesn't deserve to be used.

... All sages from the emperor Shun onwards are sages of *youwei* 有為. The duke Tai's achievement in national wealth and power and the duke Zhou's achievement in propriety and music are different in goal, but both are equally *youwei*. Confucius dreamt of being like Duke Zhou...How should it be possible only after *wuwei*? Scholars do not know what *youwei* is like nor what *wuwei* is like.

聖人之學，無為而成者也。然今之言無為者，不過曰無心焉耳。夫既謂之心矣，何可言無也。既謂之為矣，又安有無心之為乎。農無心，則田必蕪；工無心，則器必廢；學者無心，則業必廢。無心安可得也！解者又曰，所謂無心者，無私心耳，非真無心也。夫私者人之心也。人必有私而後其心乃見，若無私，則無心矣。如服田者，私有秋之獲而後治田必力；居家者，私積倉之獲而後治家也必力；為學者，私進取之獲而後舉業之治也必力。故官人而不私以祿，則雖召之，必不來矣；苟無高爵，則雖勸之，必不至矣。雖有孔子之聖，苟無司寇之任，相事之攝，必不能一日安其身於魯也決矣。此自然之理，必至之符，非可以架空而臆說也。然則為無私之說者，皆畫餅之談，觀場之見。但令隔壁好聽，不管腳根虛實，無益於事。祇亂道耳，不足采也...自舜以下，要皆有為之聖人也。太公之富強，周公之禮樂，注措雖異，有為均也。孔子夢寐周公...安在乎必於無為而後可耶？但學者不知如何為有為，又何如為無為耳。⁴⁰⁶

Li Zhi's discussion appears ambiguous because Li admits that sagely teaching is the ideal *wuwei* politics but holds that the historical figures including the emperor Shun and Confucius are all construed as examples of *youwei* politics. Nevertheless, the above discussion may be understood in conjunction with Li Zhi's understanding of the *Laozi* Ch. 3. If what Li Zhi means by "selfishness" (*si*) is a spontaneous and natural desire for sustenance, the *wuwei* politics does not have to oppress it, as the highest ruling lets people follow what their heart-mind desires. (3-[3]) To this effect, the point is not a matter of choice between *wuxin* and

⁴⁰⁶ "Deye ruchen houlun" 德業儒臣後論 (also known as "wuwei lun 無為論"), *Zangshu*, *juan* 32; *Li Zhi wenji*, volume 2, pp. 626-627. Translation is substantially adapted from de Bary, *ibid.*, pp. 252-254.

youxin but whether the heart-mind properly functions. This is why Li Zhi was critical of scholars who fixated on the literal meaning and division of *youwei* and *wuwei*; when the heart-mind properly functions and its desires are justifiable for individuals' sustenance, the so-called *youxin* turns into *wuxin*, i.e., spontaneity (*ziran*); accordingly, *youwei* becomes reconcilable with *wuwei*.

Ch. 49 provides another insight into the *wuwei* politics. Ch. 3 discusses mainly emptying people's heart-mind, while Ch. 49 focuses on the heart-mind of sages, i.e., the ideal rulers, which should be the highest achievement of the cultivation:

49-[1] *Sages do not have a constantly [fixed] mind but regard the common people's mind as their mind. [Thus, they think,] 'I regard those who are good as good and those who are not good as good too.' Thus, they attained goodness. [And they think,] 'I trust those who are trustworthy and those who are not honest as well.' Thus, they attained trustworthiness.*

49-[2] *In the world, sages harmoniously mix their mind with [that of people in] the world.*

49-[3] *All the common people pay attention to what their ears and eyes receive, and sages treat them all as babies.*

聖人無常心，以百姓心爲心。善者吾善之，不善者吾亦善之，德善。信者吾信之，不信者吾亦信之，德信。聖人在天下，惻惻爲天下渾其心。百姓皆注其耳目，聖人皆孩之。

49-[1] Some among the common people are good (*shan* 善) and some are not good (*bushan* 不善; bad, evil); nevertheless, sages regard all of them as good. Some are trustworthy and some are not; nevertheless, sages regard all of them as trustworthy. Generally speaking, how can sages have a *[deliberate] mind* to regard them as good and trustworthy? It is because they consistently regard the common people's *heart-minds* as good and trustworthy. Accordingly, Laozi says, "They have attained goodness" (*deshan* 德善) and "They have attained trustworthiness (*dexin* 德信)."

百姓有善不善，而聖人皆善之；百姓有信不信，而聖人皆信之。夫聖人曷嘗有善、信之心哉，一以百姓之心爲善、信故也。故曰德善、德信也。

49-[2] Generally, it is a long time since each and every person in the world had *their own minds*. [However,] sages unite with all people in the world, mixing with them and having *the unifying mind* (*yixin* 一心).

夫天下之人，各一其心也久矣。聖人則合天下之人，而渾爲一心。

49-[3] All the common people pay attention to what their ears and eyes receive. And they judge (observe) each other in their own positions. And they regard themselves as subjects [in judgment] (*ci* 此; this; subject); therefore, they judge each other to be right or wrong, and thus cannot be one with each other. Sages regard this [situation in the world] as unpleasant. Thus, they do not get angry even when they hear [something bad] from others. And they consistently face others as if they are babies.

百姓皆注其耳目，以我觀彼，以此視我，各相是非，不可一也。聖人見此不喜，聞彼不怒，一以嬰孩遇之。

49-[Sum] Accordingly, they neither sympathize ‘that’ nor get angry at ‘this.’ Nevertheless, all things are smoothly transformed and the world is stabilized [by sages]. Sages do not have a constantly [fixed] mind but regard the common people’s mind as their mind. This is the great import of the highest ruling of the world, which is that which can be done by *wuwei*.

是以彼亦不矜, 此亦不慍, 釋然皆化, 而天下定矣。聖人無常心, 以百姓之心爲心也。如此, 此太上治世之大旨, 所以能無爲者哉。 (**LZJ** Ch. 49)

Li Zhi explains that the heart-mind of sages is “the unifying mind” (*yixin*) which is unbiased and receptive to all kinds of thought. As discussed earlier, in Ch. 3, Li Zhi introduced the concept of the “primitive hodge-podge” (*hundun*) as the ideal state of the heart-mind. The unifying mind of sages is virtually the same as the *hundun* mind of people because both of them do not refer to a homogenizing and impositional mind but the unbiased, undifferentiated, and open totality. Thus, the unifying mind of sages can generate the ideal ruling of *wuwei*; it does not function as a fixed value system or criteria for judgment to be imposed on individuals or the society.

3-2) *Political Import of Oneness: Homogeneity and Universality?*

At this point, a possible question to ask is how Li Zhi views the social units that make individuals reside in the world. In other words, individuals lead their life in families, villages, towns, cities, and countries, and thereby can belong to the world. If Li Zhi’s emphasis on oneness aimed at the homogenization or centralized arrangement of various social units for easy control, embracing oneness might be practically an authoritarian viewpoint and would not cherish the value of individuals and variety. The *Laozi jie* Ch. 54 provides a clue to our question:

54-[1] *That which is well built [from the ground] cannot [easily] fall down; that which is well packed cannot be [easily] unpacked. Hence, the ancestral ceremony by the descendants [of people who practice such things] is not stopped. If such things are cultivated in one’s self, the virtue [i.e., effect] would be true. 54-[2] If cultivated in a family, the virtue would be surplus. If cultivated in a village, the virtue would be lasting. If cultivated in a country, the virtue would be abundance. If cultivated in the world, the virtue would be universality. 54-[3] Therefore one can observe one’s self through one’s self; a*

family through a family; a village through a village; the world through the world. How can we understand the way the world is? It is through this.

善建者不拔, 善抱者不脫, 子孫以祭祀不輟, 修之於身, 其德乃真, 修之於家, 其德乃餘, 修之於鄉, 其德乃長, 修之於國, 其德乃豐, 修之於天下, 其德乃普, 故以身觀身, 以家觀家, 以鄉觀鄉, 以國觀國, 以天下觀天下, 吾何以知天下然哉, 以此。

54-[1] Today's [practice of] congealing *the psyche* has such a weak foundation that can be [easily] pulled out; *securing the center* has such a weak grip that can be [easily] released. [Today's people] do not know "this," which makes naturally ceaseless sacrificial rites by descendants when there are already ancestors. How is it done forcibly! **54-[1]-Expl.** Accordingly, if one builds [the psyche] through "this," it becomes a good building up (*shanjian* 善建); if one **embraces oneness** through [understanding] "this," it becomes a good embracement (*shanbao* 善抱); if one cultivates one's self through "this," it becomes **True Cultivation** (*zhenxiu* 真修).

今之凝神者, 皆可拔之建也; 守中者, 皆可脫之抱也。不知此猶祭祀然, 既有祖宗, 則子孫祭享自然不輟, 烏用強之哉! 故以此建立, 是為善建; 以此抱一, 是為善抱; 以此修身, 是為真修。

54-[2] When we extend "this" to family, country, and Heaven-and-Earth (*tiandi* 天地), we can observe the commonality [of them]. Accordingly, it is possible to observe the world (*tianxia* 天下) from the viewpoint of one's self . **54-[2]-Ext.** And it is also possible to observe the world from the viewpoint of the world. If it is possible to observe the world from the viewpoint of the world, the "**Great Observation**" (*daguan* 大觀) will be in the upper [class], so that [the upper class] practices *wuwei* and yet [all things will be] **self-transformed** (*zihua* 自化; spontaneous transformation).⁴⁰⁷

由此推之家、國、天地, 可類觀矣。故以身觀天下可也, 以天下觀天下可也。能以天下觀天下, 則大觀在上, 無為而自化矣。

Despite the ambiguity of the original text, it seems clear that Li Zhi understands "*this*" to be the key to establishing the psyche, embracing oneness, and the cultivation of one's self (**54-[1]-Expl.**); therefore, it is none other than *Dao*. And **54-[2]** shows that "true cultivation" of one's self is the key to understanding all other social units and even Heaven-and-Earth, so that one can view all things from the perspective of one's self. This suggests that Li Zhi understands that *Dao* is universal to all things, and thus, if one can understand or cultivate her/his self, she/he can understand all other things. (**54-[2]**) This undoubtedly alludes to the Mencian and Yangming's viewpoint on the unity of all things; a person's self, i.e., the

⁴⁰⁷ Numbering is done for the sake of the present discussion; originally, the commentaries of this chapter are tightly connected to each other and constitute just one paragraph.

heart-mind or innate knowing can encompass all myriad things.⁴⁰⁸ However, 54-[2]-Ext. in conjunction with the original text shows an interesting point; although one can analogically compare one's self with the family, country, and Heaven-and-Earth, the world (*tianxia*) can be observed from the perspective of the world. Likewise, the country can be viewed in terms of country; the village in terms of village; the family in terms of family. Li Zhi calls this viewpoint the “Great Observation” (*daguan*). The import of “Great Observation” can be understood through the following concepts, “*wuwei*” and “self-transformation” (*zihua*); it is the great observation to understand each unit through its own characteristic and disposition (*ziran*) and not to disturb (*wuwei*) their characteristics and dispositions. Then, as a result, *zihua* will be done. Differently put, at the level of the world or Heaven-and-Earth, all things in it can be regarded as unified (oneness); nevertheless, smaller units including individuals can be thought to maintain their own integrity (oneness). Rather, oneness of the world is constituted by oneness of every smaller unit, which may constitute another kind of oneness – the oneness of universality and particularity. Accordingly, Li Zhi's understanding of oneness implies neither authoritarianism nor a homogenization and centralization of the world. Ch. 61 seems to support our reading:

A big country is [like] the downstream part of a river, the confluence in the world, and the [profound] female of the world. The female always overcomes the male by stillness, and she is always humble (xia 下) by stillness. Therefore a big country takes over small countries by humbling itself toward small countries. And a small country takes over a big country by humbling itself toward a big country. Hence, some [i.e., big countries] takes over others by humbling itself; on the other hand, some [i.e., small countries] takes over others although they are humble. Big countries want but to bring up others as well, and small countries want but to join and serve others. Generally, the bigger should be humble [toward the smaller] so that both can attain what they want altogether.

大國者下流，天下之交，天下之牝，牝常以靜勝牡，以靜爲下，故大國以下小國，則取小國，小國以下大國，則取大國，故或下以取，或下而取，大國不過欲兼畜人，小國不過欲入事人，夫兩者各得其所，大者宜爲下。

People [usually] understand that a small country can take a big country by virtue of being humble, but they don't understand that a big country can be humble, thereby taking small countries. Thus, it is especially appropriate for the bigger to be positioned

⁴⁰⁸ Refer to *Mencius* 7A:1, 3, 4 and *ZXL* Case. 269.

low; being low [like a river], then the [many] streams will by necessity return to it. Why is it so? All the confluences in the world [i.e., big countries] function as the [profound] female of the world. The reason why the female can overcome the male is because the female can wait for the move [of the male] by using the stillness [of the female] and wait to be higher by being humble. Accordingly, we can see just its constant overcoming. Thus, the countries that can humble themselves can be the point at which others come and join one another. Whether it is a big or small country, it will be universal that the confluence occurs [in the countries like] the [profound] female. The female's constant overcoming is like this indeed.

人知小國之取大國也, 以其下之也; 不知大國之能下也, 乃所以取小國者也。故大者尤宜爲下, 下則流必歸焉。何也? 天下之所交者, 皆天下之牝也。牝之所以勝牡者, 以其能靜以待動, 能爲下以待上, 故但見其常勝焉耳。然則能爲下者, 則天下自往交焉。國有大小, 其交於牝一也, 牝之常勝也固如此。(*LZJ* Ch. 61)

Li Zhi holds that “people” do not understand why/how a big country can take over small countries “by humbling itself toward small countries.” Given that the original text does not specifically mention it, “people” in Li’s comment seem to refer to his contemporaries. Presumably, Li thinks that people assume humbleness (*xia*) in the text to be a crafty strategy rather than a moral virtue, so that the case of a small country can easily satisfy their assumption. However, Li Zhi holds that bigger countries have to humble themselves more than small countries. This suggests that Li Zhi does not regard humbleness as a cunning tactic. Li Zhi explains the reason in conformity with the original text; big countries should act as if they are the mouths of rivers where various streams (i.e., small countries) join or the confluences or the profound female (valley) that are receptive to things coming in (i.e., small countries). Further, insofar as small countries can have the quality of the female, they can also have a chance to take over big countries, and thereby become new big countries as the confluence of various streams. Thus, small countries are not ignored as well. Li Zhi’s appreciation of the value of small countries appears to be supported by his comment on “A small country with few people” (*xiaoguo guamin* 小國寡民) in Ch. 80:

A small country with few people – this is what I will try [in the future]. Even if there were hundreds of talented people, yet they were not hired naturally [anywhere], they would not come and go here and there [to be hired] until they die. If [the situation] were to be like this, how could we be unhappy?

小國寡民, 吾將試焉。能使夫有什伯人之才而自不用, 以至老死不相往來, 如此豈不快哉! (*LZJ* Ch. 80)

Obviously, Li Zhi does not agree with the interaction between various countries; nevertheless, his point should not be that the quality of the confluence of a river is undesirable, but that the homogenization or centralization of the whole world is not desirable. Such a result is brought about by talented people and their employment; talented people have always been the strategists for the unification, homogenization, and centralization of the world.

Li Zhi's political philosophy seen in the *Laozi jie* does not appear simple at all because he appreciates the value of a big country, yet does not hold that small countries have to be merged into one big country; rather, Li Zhi says that "a small country with few people," i.e., little population is what he wants to build. This means that his appreciation of the value of a big country does not draw on an imperialistic dream, i.e., homogenization and centralization but on *wuwei* and *ziran* as political ideals. Bigger countries or social units can be like the confluence of various streams only when they do not interfere with smaller streams, i.e., the spontaneous natures of smaller countries or social units, which include an individual human.

VI. Conclusion

The ideas and concepts in the *Laozi* were ambiguous yet inspirational to many scholars in East Asia. Even Neo-Confucians, who ostensibly viewed Daoism with suspicion, were attracted to the *Laozi*. Yulgok and Li Zhi tried to re-appreciate the *Laozi* while they pondered on their philosophical problems. Both Yulgok's and Li Zhi's commentaries on the *Laozi* show that "Cheng-Zhu" and "Yangming" Neo-Confucian philosophical frameworks and concepts can be effectively appropriated for interpretation of the *Laozi*. In fact, their use of Neo-Confucian concepts seems to help renew and develop the issues in the philosophy of Laozi. This might be possible as Daoism and Neo-Confucianism both touched on such perennial issues in Chinese thought as the unity of Heaven (nature) and human beings (*tianren heyi* 天人合一), the unity of all things (*wanwu yiti* 萬物一體), and self-cultivation and governing the people. Historically, of course, Daoism contributed to the formation of Neo-Confucianism. Moreover, Buddhist influence on Neo-Confucianism cannot be ignored. In East Asia, Buddhism was translated and understood by using Daoist language and thought, and particularly Chan (Zen) Buddhism was the most pro-Daoist form of Buddhism and deeply influenced Neo-Confucian scholars. Yulgok and Li Zhi's Chan Buddhist backgrounds could have facilitated their approach to Daoist thought.

But historical explanations do not tell us how individual scholars came to terms with the differences among these traditions. Yulgok and Li Zhi appreciated the *Laozi* as well as Buddhism in the spirit of "self-attainment" (*zide*; getting it from/for oneself); the most important issue in learning is whether or not one can, from/for one's self, understand and practice the fundamentals of learning regardless of lineage and affiliations. For Yulgok and Li Zhi, when one can learn from within, one reaches the realm in which Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism converge in the universal learning of *Dao (li)*, the heart-mind (*xin*),

and human nature (*xing*) for self-cultivation (*xiuji*) and governing the people (*zhiren*). Indeed, the spirit of “self-attainment” may suggest syncretism. However, Yulgok and Li Zhi did not set syncretism itself as their goal; rather, it would be fair to suggest that the *Laozi* was a classic in which Yulgok and Li Zhi could find insight into the universal principle and its implication on self and society. In this respect, Yulgok and Li Zhi agree that the *Laozi* is no different from any Confucian classic. However, this does not mean that Yulgok and Li Zhi agree completely in their understanding of the *Laozi*. Due to their different philosophical backgrounds, their reading of the *Laozi* is different from each other in detail.

Yulgok links Laozi’s *Dao* with such concepts as *li* and *taiji*, and associates his discussion on non-being (*wu*)/being (*you*) with Cheng-Zhu *li-qi* philosophy. On the other hand, in Li Zhi’s understanding of the *Laozi*, the concepts of being and non-being are the most crucial concepts together with the concept of the heart-mind, and the Neo-Confucian *li* and *qi* concepts are hardly used as a pair. Li’s understanding of the philosophy of Laozi is under the influence of the Yangming school. This difference is most clearly expressed in their understanding of the concept of the “One” (*yi* 一) in the *Laozi*. For Yulgok the “One” is *Dao*, *li*, and *taiji*. For Li Zhi “*yi*” is ‘oneness’ as totality that can be attained by/in the heart-mind. Li Zhi interprets “attaining the One” (*deyi*) as “Understanding the *Dao* or *li* of reaching unity” (*zhi zhiyi zhi Dao/li*), an awareness of the unity and equality of all things. To sum up the difference between them, in the *Sun-Eon*, all key concepts converge on *Dao*, or *li* as the overarching truth or principle; in the *Laozi jie*, the concepts of *Dao* and *wu/you* are to be methodologically dismissed to prevent any attachment to overarching concepts and to gain freedom in the heart-mind (*xin*). Thus, Li Zhi’s understanding of *Dao* relates directly to the problem of the heart-mind.

The common philosophical issue pervading Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s reading of the *Laozi* is the *ziran* (spontaneity) and *wuwei* (no deliberate action; non-impositionality) of *Dao*.

Since *Dao* is defined as spontaneous and non-deliberate, it is difficult to regard *Dao* as the moral principle; nevertheless, *Dao* is explained to have moral significance. This is not only unique to the philosophy of Laozi but also applicable to Neo-Confucianism; Neo-Confucian *li* is also explained to have the same qualities as *Dao* of the *Laozi*. Yulgok and Li Zhi deal with this problem in their contexts. For Yulgok the impersonality and amorality of *Dao* (*li*) is affirmed as the objective and descriptive principle of nature. However, when Yulgok defines *de* (virtue) as the reified *Dao* (*li*), i.e., the Neo-Confucian concept of “human nature” (*xing*), the faith in “the innate goodness of human nature” (*xingshan*) may be called into question. Thus, Yulgok highlights the ultimate ethical effect of trans-ethical *Dao* and captures this ethicality of *Dao* and *xing* by introducing the concept of “originally-so-ness” (*bonyeon/benran*). On the other hand, for Li Zhi the *ziran* and *wuwei* of *Dao* relates to his radical negation of *Dao* (*Dao* as non-*Dao*), which is comparable to the idea of “True Emptiness (*zhenkong*)” and the “original state of the heart-mind” (*xin zhi bentu*) as “neither good nor evil” (*wushan wu’e*). Li Zhi’s position emphasizes that one should take all things as they are and let all things go by what they are so that things can find the optimal state by themselves.

The above difference between them is followed by the difference in their understanding of the ideal *wuwei* politics in the *Laozi*. Yulgok’s understanding of the *wuwei* politics focuses on the idea of mystical, peaceful governance and obedience by moral sages and people. Hence, Yulgok emphasizes moral cultivation and propriety. On the other hand, Li Zhi’s understanding of the *wuwei* politics emphasizes the value of diverse individuals, which may be rendered as pro-liberalism or pluralism, although it is still based on his belief in the fundamental unity of all myriad things.

In sum, Yulgok tried to discern in the *Laozi* the universal “principle” (*li*) that penetrates both nature and the human being, while Li Zhi tried to find in the *Laozi* the way of

the “heart-mind” that frees us from attachment to fixed principles (*dingli* 定理). The contrast between Yulgok and Li Zhi in understanding of the *Laozi* appears to be caused by the difference between “Cheng-Zhu” learning and “Yangming” learning. However, Yulgok and Li Zhi as 16th century’s Neo-Confucians did not just reiterate Zhu Xi’s and Yangming’s thought. Yulgok refined the orthodox Neo-Confucianism yet made it more open-minded (non-partisan) and practical, and Li Zhi magnified the liberalistic and practical characters of Yangming learning so that Yangming learning could be developed into a non-partisan learning for spirituality and practicality. These are reflected in their *Laozi* commentaries.

In conclusion, I think that Yulgok’s and Li Zhi’s commentaries are not mere imposition of their thought on the *Laozi* but a successful philosophical synthesis; Yulgok and Li Zhi tried to re-discover the truth of the *Laozi* in their own philosophical contexts, thereby bequeathing to posterity two different yet equally insightful Neo-Confucian perspectives on the *Laozi*.

Selected Bibliography

Primary Sources

A. Yulgok and Li Zhi's Works

Yulgok jeonso 栗谷全書 2 Volumes, Seoul: Seongkyunkwan dahakkyo Daedongmuхва yeonkuwon 成均館大學校 大東文化研究院, 1971.

Yulgok jip 栗谷集, Minjok munhwa chujinheo 民族文化追進會 edit., Hankook munjip chonkan 韓國文集叢刊 series (Digital edition is available on line: <http://www.minchu.or.kr>)

Kukyeok Yulgokjeonso 國譯 栗谷全書 (The complete Korean translation of *Yulgokjeonso* with the original text) 7 Volumes, Seongnam: The Academy Korean Studies, 1987-8. (Vol.5 *Seonghak jipyo* 聖學輯要)

Sun-Eon 醇言, Seoul: Yeokang chulpansa 驪江出版社, 1984 (Photocopied from *Kyujang kak* edition)

Lizhi wenji 李贄文集 7 volumes, edited by Zhang Jianye 張建業, Liu Yousheng 劉幼生, et al., Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000. (Vol.1 *Fenshu* 焚書 *Xu fenshu* 續焚書 / Vol.2 & 3 *Zangshu* 藏書 (shang, xia 上, 下) / Vol.4 *Xu zangshu* 續藏書 / Vol.5 *Chutan ji* 初潭集, *Sishu ping* 四書評 / Vol.6 *Shigang pingyao* 史綱評要 / Vol.7. *Laozi jie* 老子解 *Zhuangzi jie* 莊子解, *Jiuzheng Yiyin* 九正易因, *Yinguo lu* 因果錄, *Yongqing dawen* 永慶答問, *Zuolinjitan* 柞林紀潭, *Daogulu* 道古錄, *Anran luzui* 闇然錄最, *Sunzi cantong* 孫子參同)

Xu fenshu 續焚書, *Fenshu/Xu fenshu* 焚書/續焚書, Fajia lei 法家類, Zibu 子部, Sibukanyao 四部刊要, Taipei: Hanjing wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1984.

Laozi jie 老子解. Hong Liangxun 洪良逵 edit., Li Zhi comment., *Daode jing jie* 道德經解 (*Laozi jie*), *Zangwai Daoshu* 藏外道書 Book.(ce) 1:645a-669b., compiled by Li Yimang 李一氓, Sichuan: Bashu shushe, 1992.

B. Other ancient sources

Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤, *Ercheng ji* 二程集 2 vols, Taipei: Hanjing wenhua, 1983.

- Han shan 憨山, 1546-1623. *Han shan da shi meng you quan ji* 憨山大師夢遊全集, Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000.
- Han Yu 韓愈. Qu Shouyuan 屈守元 and Chang Sichun 常思春 edit., *Hanyuquanji jiaozhu* 韓愈全集校注, Chengdu: Sichun daxue, 1996.
- Hangul (Korean) Tripitaka Retrieval System* built by Electron Buddhist Text Institute of Dongguk Univ., Korea (<http://ebti.dongguk.ac.kr>)
- Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲. *Mingyidaifanglu* 明夷待訪錄, Sibubei 四部備要, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, (Haishanxianguan 海山仙館 congshuben 叢書本)
- Jiao Hong 焦竑, 1541-1620. *Laozi yi/ Zhuangzi yi* 老子翼/莊子翼 (Kanbuntaigei 9), Toyamahusa, Shōwa 59 (1984)
- Joseon wangjo shilrok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (From the online edition of Kuksa pyeonchan wiwonhoe 國史編纂委員會, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>)
- Koryo (Korea) Tripitaka* (=K. 高麗大藏經, the extant oldest version of Tripitaka in Chinese)
- Kukyeok Joseon wangjo shilrok* 國譯 朝鮮王朝實錄 (From the online edition of Korean translation by Minjok munhwa chujinhoe 民族文化追進會, <http://www.minchu.or.kr>)
- Li Lingfeng 嚴靈峰 compile and edit., *Ji wanganshi Laozi zhu* 輯王安石老子注, *Wuqiubeizhai Laozi jicheng chupian* 無求備齋 老子集成 初編.
- Li You 李攸, *Songchaoshishi* 宋朝事實, volume 7 (Biji xiaoshuo daguan 筆記小說大觀; 13:3), Taipei: Xinxing shuju photoprint, 1983.
- Wang Anshi 王安石. *Linchuan wenji* 臨川文集, Taiwan: shangwuyin shuguan (*Wenyuange siku quanshu* 文淵閣 四庫全書 1105)
- Luoyuzhang ji* 羅豫章集, Shanghai: Shangwuyin shuguan, 1937, Guoxue jiben congshu 國學基本叢書 series edition.
- Seo Myong-Eung 徐命膺. *Dodeok ji'gwi* 道德指歸 (photocopied).
- Shi Jun 石峻, Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, Fang Litian 方立天, Xu Kangsheng 許抗生, Le Shouming 樂壽明 edit., *Zhongguo Fojiao sixiangziliaoxuanbian* 中國佛教思想資料選編 2 (juan) – 2 (ce), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
- Sishu huowen* 四書或問, Shanghai: Shanghai guji/ Anhui jiaoyu chupanshe, 2001.
- Taisho Tripitaka* (=T. 大正新修大藏經)
- The *Shurangama Sutra*, by the Buddhist Text Translation Society (<http://www.e-sangha.com/alphone/shurangama.html>)

- Wang Fuzhi 王夫之. *Laoziyan* 老子衍, *Chunshan quanshu* 船山全書 juan13, Changsha: Yuelushushe, 1993.
- Xiamendaxue lishi xi 廈門大學 歷史係. ed. and comp., *Lizhi yanjiu cankaoziliao* 李贄研究參考資料 I-III, Fujian: Fujian renmin da chubanshe, 1975-6.
- Xingli daquan 性理大全, Shangwuyin shuguan, *Wenyuange Sikuquanshu* 文淵閣 四庫全書, Book No.711.
- Yang Guishan xiansheng quanji 楊龜山先生全集, Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1974.
- Zhuanxi lu 傳習錄, edited by Chan Wing-tsit 陳榮捷, Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1983.
- Zhuxi ji 朱熹集, Chengdu: Sichuanjiaoyu chubanshe, 1996.
- Zhuxi xu 朱熹序, *Jinsilu Jijie* 近思錄集解 (Collected commentaries on the *Jinsilu*), edited by Ye Cai; Kanbuntaikei 漢文大系 22, Toyamahusa, Shōwa 59 (1984)
- Zhuji yulei 朱子語類, punctuated by Wang Xingxian 王星賢, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994.

Secondary Sources

A. East Asian languages

- Araki Kengo 荒木見悟, Kim Seok-Keun 김석근 trans., *Bulkyo-wa Yangmyeonghak* 불교와 양명학, Seoul: Seokwangsa, 1993. Originally, *Bukyō to Yōmeigaku* 仏教と陽明学, Tokyo: Daisan bunmeisha, 1979.
- Bak Byong-Dae 朴炳大. trans., *Wonbon Juyeok* 原本周易, Seoul: Ilshin seojeok chulpansa, 1995.
- Bak Wan-Shik 박완식. edit and trans., *Daehak Daehakhokmun Daehakgangeo* 대학大學、대학학문大學或問、대학강어大學講語, Seoul: Yiron-kwa shilcheonsa, 1993.
- Bak Yil-Bong 朴一峰. trans., *Keunsa rok* 近思錄, Seoul: Yukmunsa, 1993.
- Bao Zunxin 包遵信. Mingdai zhuming fajia daibiao Li Zhi 明代著名法家代表李贄, *Wenwu*, 1974. 6.
- Chen Gu-ying 陳鼓應. *Laozi jinzhu jinyi ji pingjie* 老子今注今譯及評介, Taipei: Shangwuyin shuquan, 1974. Second edition.
- _____. *Lao Zhuang xin lun* 老莊新論, Hong Kong : Zhonghua shuju, 1991.
- _____. *Yi zhuan yu dao jia sixiang* 易傳與道家 思想, Beijing : Sanlianshudian, 1996.

- Chen Mu 錢穆. *Zhuzi xue tigang* 朱子學提綱, Taipei, Sanmin shuju, 1971.
- _____. *Zhuang Lao tongbian* 莊老通辨, Taipei: Lianjing chupanshiye gongsi, 1994.
- Chen Lai 陳來. *Youwu zhi jing: Wang yangming zhexue de jingshen* 有無之境: 王陽明哲學的精神, Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991.
- _____. *Song Ming li xue* 宋明理學, Shengyang: Liaoning jiaoyu, 1992.
- _____. *Chen Lai zi xuan ji* 陳來自選集, Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 1997.
- _____. *Zhu zi zhe xue yan jiu* 朱子哲學研究, Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue, 2000.
- Choi Jin-Duk 崔真德. "Kongja Yinhak-ui yilkwanseong hokeun buk-yilkwanseong 孔子仁學의 一貫性 혹은 不一貫性", *Jeonshin munhwa yeonku* Vol. 61 (1995).
- _____. *Juhee-ui no-bul bipann* 朱熹의 老佛批判, 1996.
- _____. *Jujahak-eul wehan byonmyong: Na Jeong-ahm-ui yi-il bunsu cheolhak* 朱子學을 변명-羅整菴의 理一分殊 철학, Seongnam: Chengkye, 2000.
- _____. Toegye likishimseongron-ui tal-dodeok-hyeongyisanghak-jeok haeseok-cheonmyeongdo-ui bunseok-eul jungshim-euro 退溪理氣心性論의 脫道德形而上學的 解釋 - 天命圖의 分釋을 中心으로, *Toegye hakbo* Vol.112, 2002.
- Cui Wenyin 崔文印. Tan shigang pingyao de zhenwei wenti 談史綱評要的真偽問題, *Wenwu*, 1977. 8.
- _____. Lizhi sishu ping zhenwei bian 李贊四書評真偽辨, *Wenwu* 4, 1979.
- _____. Sishu ping bushi lizhi zhuzuo de kaozeng 四書評不是李贊著作的考證, *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, 1980. 4.
- Feng Youlan 馮友蘭. *Zhongguo zhhexueshi* 中國哲學史, Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1931; Shanghai: Shangwuyin shuguan, 1935; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984; Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1992.
- _____. *Xin yuandao* 新原道, Shanghai: Shangwuyin shuquan, 1945.
- _____. *Zhongguo zhhexueshi xinbian* 中國哲學史新編, Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1989.
- _____. *Fengyoulan xuanji* 馮友蘭選集, Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1994.
- _____. Daxue wei xunxue shuo 大學荀學說, *Gushibian* 古史辨, Vol.4a, no.197 article, pp.175-83. Originally from *Yanjingxuebao* 燕京學報, 7th period (*diquqi* 第七期)

- Gao Heng 高亨, *Laozi zhenggu* 老子正詁, Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1998, Originally published in 1943.
- Han Jeong-Kil 한정길 and Jeong Yin-Jae 정인재. trans. and comp. *Jeonseup rok* 傳習錄 I and II (including Chinese, Korean, and Japanese commentaries), Seongnam: Chengkye, 2001.
- Hankook Cheolhak-sasang yeonkuhoe 한국철학사상연구회. *Kangjua hankook-cheolhak* 講座 韓國哲學, Yemunseowon, 1995.
- Hankooksasang yeonkuhoe 韓國思想研究會. *Yinseong mulseong ron* 人性物性論, Seoul: Hankilsa, 1994.
- Hankuk sasang yeonkuso 韓國思想研究所 edit and comp., *Hankuk-ui cheolhak sasang* 韓國의哲學思想 – *Jaryo-wa haeseol* 資料와 解説, Yemunseowon, 2001.
- Hong Seung-Jik 홍승직 trans. *Bunseo/Sok Bunseo* 분서/속분서(selective translation), Seoul: Hongyik chulpansa, 1998.
- Hong Xiuping 洪修平, Wu Yonghe 吳永和. *Hong xiu ping Chan-xue yu xuan-xue* 禪學與玄學, Taipei : Yangzhi wenhua shiye gongsi, 1994.
- Hou Wailu 侯外廬 edit. *Songming lixueshi* 宋明理學史, Renmin chubanshe, 1987.
 _____ edit. *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* 中國思想通史 volum.4b, Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1960.
- Huang Renyou 黃仁宇. *Wanli shiwo nian* 萬曆十五年, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006.
- Hwang Joon-Yon 황준연. *Yulgok chelhak-ui yihae* 율곡 철학의 이해, Seoul: Seokwangsa, 1995.
 _____. *Yi Yulgok, Keu sam-ui moseup* 이율곡, 그 삶의 모습, Seoul: Seoul daehakgyo chulpanbu, 2000.
- Hwang Ui-Dong 황의동 edit. *Yulgok Yi Yi* 율곡 이이, Seoul: Yemunseowon, 2002.
- Jeong Yin-Bo 鄭寅普. *Yangmyonghak yeonlon* 陽明學演論, Seoul: Samsungmunhwa-jaedan, 1972.
- Jeong Yin-Jae 鄭仁在. “Wangyangmong-ui sakukyo-ui uimi 王陽明의 四句教의 의미”, *Hyundae Cheolhak-kwa Sahoe*, Seokwangsa, 1992.
- Ji Wenfu 嵇文甫. *Wanming sisangshihun* 晚明思想史論, Chongqing, shangwuyin shuguan, 1944.
 _____. *Zuopai wangxue* 左派王學, shanghai Kaiming shudian, 1934 (*Minguo congshu* 民國叢書 2-7)

- Jin Jingfang 金景芳 et al., *Jin Jingfang xuean* 金景芳學案, Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2003, Book.I (2 Volumes)
- Jo Min-Hwan 조민환. *Yuhakjadeul-yi boneun nojang-sasang* 儒學者들이 보는 老莊哲學, Yemunseowon, 1997.
- Kamata Shikeo 鎌田茂雄, Han Hyeong-Jo trans., *Hwaeom-ui sasang* 화엄의 사상, Seoul: Koryowon, 1987. Originally, *Kegon no shisō* 華嚴の思想, Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1983.
- Kim An-Guk 金安國 et al. *Dongasia yeonpyo* 동 아시아연표, Chengnyonsa, 1992.
- Kim Hak-Mok 김학목 trans. *Yulgok yiyi-ui noja – Suneon, jeongtong jujahakja-ui noja yilki* 율곡 이이의 노자 – 醇言, 정통 주자학의 노자 읽기, Yemunseowon, 2001.
- Kim Hak-Ze 金學材. Juk'eum-kwa sam – uimi-wa mu'uimi hok'eun danjeol-kwa yeonsok keu sayi-aeseo kyunhyeng japki 죽음과 삶 – 의미와 무의미 혹은 단절과 연속, 그 사이에서 균형 잡기, *Cheongkye nonchong* 淸溪論叢 (*Journal of Korean Studies*) Vol.17, 2002: 3-28.
- _____. Songdae Shinyuhakjadeul-ui Nojakwan-ae daehan kaekwaljeok shitam 宋代新儒學者들의 老子觀에 대한 概括的 始探, *Dongseo-cheolhak-yeonku*, _____, *Yulgok Suneon-ui yeonku* 栗谷 醇言의 研究, The Academy of Korean Studies MA thesis, 2001.
- Kim Kyung 김혜경, Bunseo 분서 I and II, Seoul: Hankilsa, 2004.
- Kim Hyong-Hyo 金炯孝. *Derida-wa Nojang-ui dokbup* 데리다와 老莊의 讀法, Seongnam, The Academy of Korean Studies, 1994.
- _____ et al. *Yulgok-ui sasang-kwa kui hyondaejeok uimi* 栗谷의 사상과 그 현대적 의미, Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies, 1995.
- Kim Kil-Rak 金吉洛. *Sangsanhak kwa Yangmyonghak* 象山學과 陽明學, Yemunseowon, 1995.
- Kim Yong-Ok 金容沃. *Dongyanghak Eotteotke hal geotyinka* 東洋學 어떻게 할 것인가, Seoul: Mineumsa, 1989.
- _____. *Noja-cheolhak Yigeot-ida* 老子哲學 이것이다, Seoul: Tongnamu, 1989
- _____. *Jeolcha-takma Daeki-manseong* 切磋琢磨 大器晚成, Tongnamu, 1987.
- _____ trans. *Noja* 老子, Tongnamu, 1994.
- _____. *Hwadu, Hyeneng-kwa Shakepeare* 話頭, 혜능과 셰익스피어, Tongnamu, 1998.

- Kong Linghong 孔令宏. *Zhuxi zhexue yu daojia, daojiao* 朱熹哲學與道家、道教, Hebei: Hebei daxue chubanshe, 2001.
- Kojima Tsuyoshi 小島毅, Shin Hyeon-Seung 신현승 trans., *Sadaebu-ui sidae* 사대부의 시대, Seoul: Dongasia, 2004. Originally, *Shushigaku to Yōmeigaku* 朱子學と陽明學, Tokyo: Housoudai, 2004.
- Kubota Ryoen 久保田量遠. Choe Jun-Shik 최준식 trans., *Jungguk yubuldo samkyo-ui mannam* 中國 儒佛道 三教의 만남, Seoul: Minjoksa, 1990; Originally *Jina jubutdō kōshōshi* 支那儒仏道交渉史, Daitō, 1943.
- Li Jianxiong 李劍雄. *Jiao hong zhuan* 焦評傳, Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1998.
- Lin Haiquan 林海權. *Lizhinianpukaolue* 李贊年譜考略, Fujian renminda chubanshe, 1992.
- Lin Qixian 林其賢. *Li Zhuowu shiji xinian* 李卓吾事蹟繫年, Wenjin chubanshe, 1988.
- Liu Gusheng 劉固盛. *Songyuan laoxue shi* 宋元老學研究, Sichuan: Bashu shushe, 2001.
- Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢. *Jingdian quanshi zhong de liangzong neizaidingxiang ji qi waihua: yi Wang Bi Laozi zhu yu Guo Xiang Zhuangzi zhu weilie* 經典詮釋中的兩種內在定向及其外化: 以王弼《老子注》與郭象《莊子注》為例, *Zhongguo wenshizhe jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊, Vol. 26 (March, 2005): 287-319.
- _____. *Guanyu Laozi zhi dao de xin jieshi yu xin quanyi* 關於老子之道的重新解釋與新詮釋 (New Explanation and Interpretation of the *Tao* of Lao-tzu), *Zhongguo wenshizhe tongxun* 中國文哲研究通訊, Vol. 7, No. 2 (June, 1997): 1-40.
- Peng Cheng 鵬程. *Wanming sichao* 晚明思潮, Taipei: Liren shuju, 1994.
- Qing Si 慶思. “Lizhi de zunfa fankong sixiang” 李贊的尊法反孔思想, *Wenwu*, 1974. 5.
- Qiu Hansheng 丘漢生. *Taizhou xuepai de jiechu sixiangjia Li Zhi* 泰州學派的傑出思想家李贊, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究, 1964. 1: 115-132.
- Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖. *Li zhi nianpu* 李贊年譜, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1957.
- _____. *Lizhuowu pinglun* 李卓吾評傳, Shanghai: Shangwuyin shuguan, 1937.
- Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, et al. *Donggukdae dongyangsa yeonkgushil* 동국대 동양사 연구실 trans., *Jungkuk-ui yechi system* 韓國의 예치 시스템, Suwon: cheonggye, 2001; Originally, *Chugokutoyusiza* 中國という視座, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995.

- _____, Cheo Jin-Seok 최진석 trans., *Jungkuk sasang myeong kangui* 중국사상 명강의, Seoul: Sonamu, 2004. Originally, *Chugoku no shiso* 中國の思想, Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 1991.
- _____, Kim Yong-Cheon 김용천 trans., *Jungkuk jeonkeundae sasang-ui kuljeol-kwa jeonkae* 중국 전근대 사상의 굴절과 전개, Seoul: Dongkwaseo, 1999. Originally, *Chugoku zen-kindai shiso no kussetsu to tenkai* 中國前近代思想の屈折と展開, Tokyo: Tokyodaigaku shuppankai, 1980.
- Minjok-kwa sasang yeonkuhoe 민족과 사상 연구회. *Sa-dan Chil-jeong ron* 四端七情論, Seoul: Seokwangsa, 1992.
- Mori Noriko 森紀子. *Chūgoku ni okeru ri takugo zō no henzen* 中国における李卓吾像の変遷, *Toiyoshi kenkyu* 東洋史研究, 1974, 33.4:124-32.
- Mou Zongsan 牟宗三. *Songming ruxue de wenti yu fazhan* 宋明儒學的問題與發展, Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004.
- _____. *Zhongguo zhexueshi jiujiang* 中國哲學十九講, Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1983.
- _____. *Xinti yu xingti* 心體與性體, Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1968-69.
- Oh Keum-Seong 吳金成 et al., *Myeongmal-cheongcho sahoe-ui jomyong* 明末清初 社會의 照明, Hanul akademi, 1990.
- Ohama Akira 大濱 皓. Yi Hyeong-Seong 이형성 trans., *Beomju-ro boneun jujahak* 범주로 보는 주자학, Yemun seowon, 1997. Originally, *Sushi no tetszegaku* 朱子の哲學, Tokyodai, 1983.
- Oyanagi Sigeta 小柳司氣太, *Nojangsasang-kwa dokyo* 노장사상과 도교, Kim Nak-Pil 김낙필 trans., Seoul: Shiyinsa, 1988. Originally *Rōsōshisō to dōkyō* 老莊思想と道教, kansōyin, 1944.
- Shimada Kenji 島田虔次, Kim Seok-Keun 김석근 and Yi Keun-Woo 이근우 trans., *Jujahak-kwa Yangmyeonghak* 주자학과 양명학 (Seoul: Kkachhi); Originally, *Shushigaku to Yōmeigaku* 朱子學と陽明學, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967.
- Shin Yong-Cheol 申龍澈. *Yi Tak-Oh* 이탁오, Jishik saneopsa, 2005.
- _____. *Junggong-ae iteoseo liji sang-ui jeongchi-jeok suyong* 中共에 있어서 李贄像의 政治的 收容, *Kyeonghi sahak* 慶熙史學, 1982, 9&10:199-216
- Song Hang-Ryong 宋恒龍. *Hankook-dokyo-choelhaksa* 韓國道教哲學史, Daedongmunhwa yeonkuwon of Seongkyunkwan Univ., 1987.

- Wu Zhe 吳澤. *Ruxue fantu li zhuowu* 儒學叛徒李卓吾, shanghai: Huaxia shudian, 1949.
- Xiong Tieji 熊鐵基, et al. *Zhongguo laoxue shi* 中國老學史, Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1995.
- Xu Fuguan 徐復觀. *Lianghan sixiangshi* 兩漢思想史, Taipei: Xueshengshuju, 1976. Reprint shanghai: Huadong shifan, 2001.
- _____. *Zhongguo renxinglunshi: xianqin pian* 中國人性論史:先秦篇, Taizhong: Donghai daxue, 1963.
- Xu Jianping 許建平, *Lizhi sixiang yanbian shi* 李贄思想演變史, Beijing: Renminchubanshe, 2005.
- Xu Sumin 許蘇民. *Li zhi de zhen yu qi* 李贄的真與奇, Nanjing chubanshe, 1998.
- Yan Lingfeng 嚴靈峯. *Wuqiubeizai xueshu xinzh* 無求備齋學術新著, Taiwan shangwuyin shuguan, 1987, pp.226-65.
- Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 comment., Yilji 一指 trans., *Yimjaerok* 임제록, Seoul: Koryowon, 1988.
- Yang Guo-rong 楊國榮. *Wangxue tonglun: cong wangyangming dao xiongshili* 王學通論-從王陽明到熊十力, Shanghai, Sanlianshudian, 1990.
- Ye Guoqing 葉國慶. *Lizhi xianshi kao* 李贄先世考, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2, 1958. 2.
- Yi Jong-Ho 이종호. *Yulgok- Yinkan-kwa sasang* 栗谷 - 人間과 思想, Jishik saneopsa, 1994.
- Yi Jong-Hyon 이종현. *Dongyang-yeonpyo* 東洋年表, Tamkudang, 1997.
- Yi Kang-Su 李康洙. *Dokyo-sasang-ui yeonku* 道家思想의 研究, Minjok-munhwa-yeonkuwon of Korea Univ., 1995.
- Yi Ki-Yeong 李箕永. trans and comment., *Banya shimkyeong* 般若心經, Seoul: Hankuk bulkyo yeonkuwon, 1985.
- _____. *Hankook-ui bulkyosasang* 韓國의 佛教思想, Seoul: Samseong chupansa, 1976.
- Yin Zhihua 尹志華. *Beisong laozhi zhu yanjiu* 北宋老子注研究, Sichuan: Bashu shushe, 2004.
- Yun Sa-Soon 尹絲淳. *Hankook-yuhak nonku* 韓國儒學論究, Hyeonamsa, 1980.
- _____. *Hankook-yuhak-sasangron* 韓國儒學思想論, Yeoleumsa, 1986.
- _____. et al., *Yinseong mulseong ron* 인성물성론, Seoul: Hankilsa, 1994.
- Yi Seok-Myong 이석명. *Noja Dodeukkyeong hasangkong jangku* 老子道德經河上公章句 (annoted translation), Somyeong chulpan, 2005.
- Yu Dong-Hwan 劉東桓. *Yi Ji-ui cheonri-yinyok-kwan yeonku* 李贄의 天理人欲觀 研究, Korea Univ. PhD dissertation, 2001.

- Zhang Jianye 張建業. *Lizhi pingzhuan* 李贄評傳, Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1981(1992)
- Zhang Liwen 張立文 et al. *Dao* 道, Beijing : Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1989.
- _____. *Li* 理, Beijing : Zhongguo renmin daxue, 1991.
- _____. edit. *Xin* 心, Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1993.
- Zhu Weizhi 朱維之. *Lizhuowu lun* 李卓吾論, Fujian xiehe daxue chupanbu, 1935.
- Zhu Jianguo 朱健國. *Li Zhi zhuan – Zhongguo diyi sixiangfan* 李贄傳—中國第一思想犯, Zhongguo gongren chubanshe, 1993.
- Zhu Qian-zhi 朱謙之. *Lao zi xiao shi* 老子校釋, Beijing : Zhonghua shuju, 1980.
- _____. *Li Zhi: Shiliushiji zhongguo fanfengjian sisangde xianquzhe* 李贄:十六世紀中國反封建思想的先驅者, Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1956.
- Zuo Dongling 左東嶺. *Lizhi yu wanming wenxue sixiang* 李贄與晚明文學思想, Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1997.

B. English sources

- Ames, Roger T. *The art of rulership: a study in ancient Chinese political thought*, Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1983.
- _____. *Thinking through Confucius*, Albany: SUNY, 1987, ed.with David L. Hall
- _____. Putting the *Te* Back into Taoism, in J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames ed., *Nature in Asian Tradition of Thought*, Albany: SUNY, 1989, pp.113-144.
- _____. (translate with D.C. Lau) *Yuan Dao: tracing Dao to its source* (with an introduction by Roger T. Ames), NY: Ballantine Books, 1998.
- _____.(with David L. Hall) *Thinking from the Han : self, truth, and transcendence in Chinese and Western culture*, Albany: SUNY, 1998.
- _____, ed. *Wandering at ease in the Zhuangzi*, Albany: SUNY, 1998.
- _____ and David Hall, *Daodejing “Making This Life Significant” – A philosophical translation*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2003.
- Andersen, Poul. *The Mothod of Holding the Three Ones: A Taoist Manual of Meditation of the Fourth Century A.D.* London: Curzon Press, 1980.
- Bloom, Irene. *Knowledge painfully acquired: The K'un-chih chi by Lo Ch'in-shun*, NY: Columbia Univ., 1987.

- Charles Müller, *Korean Buddhism: A Short Overview*, <http://www.hm.tyg.jp/~acmuller/kor-bud/korbud-overview.html>, (<http://www.acmuller.net/>: 1996; Updated: August 14, 2003)
- Chan, Alan K.L. *Two Visions of the Way: A Study of the Wang Pi and the Ho-Shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao-Tzu*. Albany: SUNY, 1991.
- _____. ed., *Mencius: contexts and interpretations*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002.
- Chan, Hok-lam. *Li Chih 1527-1602 in Contemporary Chinese Historiography: New light on his life and works*, White Plains, N.Y., M.E.Sharpe, 1990.
- Chan, Wing-tsit, trans. and ed. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963, 1973.
- _____. trans. *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology Compiled by Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-chi'en*, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1967.
- _____. *Neo-Confucian terms explained: (The Pei-hsi Tzu-i) by Ch'en Ch'un, 1159-1223*, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986.
- _____. *Chu Hsi: Life and Thought*, Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. Press, 1989.
- _____. *Chu Hsi: New Studies*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989.
- _____. "The Evolution of the Confucian Concept *Jen*", *Philosophy East and West* 4.4(Jan. 1955): pp.295-319.
- _____. "The Neo-Confucian Solution to the Problem of Evil", *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philosophy* (Academia Sinica), 28(1959): pp. 773-791.
- Chang, Garma C. C. *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality – the philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1971)
- Chappell, David W. edit, *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society*. Buddhist and Taoist Studies, 2. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987.
- Chen Lai. The discussion of mind and nature in Zhu Xi's philosophy, in *Chinese philosophy in an era of globalization* / Robin R. Wang, editor, Albany: SUNY, 2004, p.75-98.
- Cheng, Chungying. Consistency and meaning and of the four-seven teaching in *Ming yü hsieh an*, *Philosophy East and West* 29, no.3, 1977.
- Chien, Edward T. *Chiao Hung and the reconstruction of Neo-Confucianism in the late Ming*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Ching, Julia, trans. *The philosophical letters of Wang Yang-ming*, Canberra : Australian National University Press, 1972.

- _____. *To acquire wisdom: the way of Wang Yang-ming*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1976
- _____. (with the collaboration of Chao-ying Fang) *The Records of Ming scholars* / by Huang Tsung-hsi, Honolulu, Univ. of Hawaii Press , 1987.
- _____. Chu Hsi and Taoism, *Meeting of minds*/ edited by Irene Bloom and Joshua A. Fogel, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996, pp.108-143.
- De Bary, W.T. *Learning for one's self: essays on the individual in Neo-Confucian thought*, Columbia University Press, 1991.
- _____. *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism*, Columbia University Press , 1989.
- _____ ed. with JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, Columbia University Press, 1985.
- _____. *The Liberal Tradition in China*, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1983.
- _____. *Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and the learning of the mind-and-heart*, Columbia University Press, 1981.
- _____. *The unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, Columbia University Press, 1975.
- _____. *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, Columbia University Press. 1970.
- Duncan, John B. Examinations and Orthodoxy in Choson Dynasty Korea, *Rethinking Confucianism: past and present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, edited by Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan and Herman Ooms, (LA:UCLA, 2002), pp. 65-94.
- Feng Youlan. A history of Chinese philosophy, Vol.1 & 2, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953.
- Galia Patt-shamir. Moral world, ethical terminology: the moral signification of metaphysical terms in Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31:3(September 2004) p.349-362.
- Goodrich, L. Carrington & Fang, C.O. edit., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, Vol.1, New York; Columbia University Press, 1976.
- Graham, A.C. *Two Chinese philosophers: Ch'eng Ming-tao and Ch'eng Yi-ch'uan*. London, Lund, Humphries [1958] [1st ed.], Reprint at La Salle, Ill. : Open Court , 1992. (foreworded by Irene Bloom)
- _____. *Chuang-tzŭ : the seven inner chapters and other writings from the book Chuang-tzŭ*, London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1981.

- _____. *Studies in Chinese Philosophy & Philosophical Literature*, The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, Singapore, 1986.
- Henke, Frederick Goodrich. trans., *The Philosophy of Wang Yang-ming* (Second edition) New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964; Originally published by the Open Court Publishing co., 1916.
- Handlin, Joanna F. *Action in Late Ming Thought*, Univ. of California Press, 1983
- Hartman, Charles. *Han Yü and the Tang Search for Unity*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Huang, Ray (Huang Renyou). *1587: A Year of No Significance*, Yale Univ. Press, 1981.
- Ivanhoe, Philip J. "The concept of *de* (virtue) in the *Laozi*." In *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi*, ed. Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip J. Ivanhoe, Albany: SUNY, 1999.
- Kasuki Sekida. trans., *Two Zen Classics – Mumonkan and Heikiganroku*, New York, Tokyo: Weatherhill Inc., 1977.
- Kohn, Livia. *Early Chinese Mysticism: Philosophy and Soteriology in the Taoist Tradition*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Lau D. C. trans., *Tao Te Ching*, Harmondsworth, Hong Kong: Penguin Books Ltd, 1963, 2001.
- _____. trans., *Mencius*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1970.
- _____. trans., *The Analects (Lunyu)*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1979.
- Langlois, Jr, John and Sun K'o-K'uan. Three Teachings Syncretism and The Thought of Ming T'ai-tsu, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* Vol. 43, No. 1. (Jun, 1983): 97-139.
- Liu Xiaogan. Savage, William E. trans., *Classifying the Zhuangzi Chapters (Zhuangzi zhixue jiqi)*, Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1994.
- _____. Wuwei (Non-Action): From Laozi to Huainanzi, *Taoist Resources* 3.1 (1991): 41-56.
- Metzger, Thomas A. *Escape from Predicament*, Columbia University Press, 1977.
- Needham, Joseph. *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge University Press, 1956.
- Nivison, David S. *The ways of Confucianism: investigations in Chinese philosophy*, Chicago: Open Court, 1996.
- Nuyen, A. T. "Naming the Unnamable: the Being of the Dao." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 22 (1995): 487-497.
- Plaks, Andrew, trans. *Ta Hsüeh and Chung Yung (The Highest Order of Cultivation and On the Practice of the Mean)*, Penguin Books, 2003.

- Robinet, Isabelle. *Taoism – Growth of a Religion*, translated by Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp.228-9. Originally, *Histoire du Taoïsme des origines au XIVe siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1992)
- Ryden, Edmund, trans. *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy* (Original title: *Zhongguo gudianzhexue gainianfanchou yaolun* by Zhang Dainian), New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Seung Sahn. *The Compass of Zen*, Massachusetts, Shambhala publication, 1997.
- Solomon, Bernard S. 'One is No Number' in China and the West, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 17 (1954): 253-60.
- Schwartz, Benjamin I. *The World of thought in ancient China*, Cambridge, London: The Belknap press of Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Tang Yongtong. "Wang Pi's New Interpretation of the *I Ching* and the *Lun-yu*," translated by Walter Liebenthal. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 10, 2 (1949): pp.124-61.
- Tu, Ching-I. ed., *Classics and Interpretations*, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000, pp.45-67
- Tu, Wei-ming. *Confucian thought: selfhood as creative transformation*, Albany: SUNY, 1985.
- Tillman, Hoyt Cleveland. *Confucian discourse and Chu His's ascendancy*, Hawaii, Univ. of Hawaii press, 1992.
- _____. Reflection on Classifying "Confucian" Lineages: Reinventions of Tradition in Song China, *Rethinking Confucianism: past and present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, edited by Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan and Herman Ooms, (LA:UCLA, 2002), pp. 33-64.
- Wagner, Rudolf G. *The Chinese Reading of the Daodejing: Wang Bi's commentary on the Laozi with critical text and translation*, Albany: SUNY, 2003.
- _____. *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi*. Albany: SUNY, 2000.
- _____. *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China – Wang Bi's Scholarly Exploration of the Dark (Xuanxue)*, Albany: SUNY, 2003.
- Williamson, H. R. *Wang An Shih - A Chinese Statesman and Educationalist of the Sung Dynasty*, volume I&II, London: Probsthain, 1937, Reprinted by Hyperion, 1973.
- Wright, Arthur F. "Review of A.A.Petrov, Wang Pi: His Place in the history of Chinese Philosophy." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 101 (1947): pp.75-80.

Yates, Robin. *Five Lost Classics: Tao, Huanglao and Yinyang in Han China*. N.Y.:

Ballantine, 1997.

Ziporyn, Brook. *The Penumbra Unbound: The Neo – Taoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang*,

Albany: SUNY, 2003.

Appendices

Appendix I

Two different views on the motive of Yulgok's stay in the Keumkang Mount

As to the *Annals's* record regarding the disharmony between Yulgok and his stepmother, who took over the responsibility of household affairs,⁴⁰⁹ there are two different views.

Song Seok-Ku holds that the third reason seems not plausible because their co-residence after the death of Shin Sayimdag could be just for a couple of months. Song further holds that the reported personality of Yulgok is not likely to have caused the discord with his stepmother. Hence, Song thinks that his philosophical interest in Buddhism may be the important motive together with Yulgok's sorrow over his mother's death.⁴¹⁰

In contrast, Hwang Joon-Yon thinks that Song's viewpoint does not seem to take into consideration a nineteen year boy's usual psychology. Thus, Hwang holds that Yulgok's (and his elder brother's) disharmony with the stepmother must be the "most important motive for the stay in the mountain," and that his "indulgence" in Buddhism is the "next motive." To support his interpretation, Hwang calls our attention to Bak Se-Che's 朴世采⁴¹¹ report (1649), "Ki Yulgok seonseng yipsansisa" 記栗谷先生入山時事 (Record of events at the time when Master Yulgok went into the mountain), which was based on Yulgok's three letters to his family. These letters are, however, not extant. The letters are said to have mentioned about the

⁴⁰⁹ 24th March, 1566, (21st year of the King Myeong's reign), *Myeongjong shilrok*, *juan* 32, *ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ Song Seok-Ku 송석구, Yulgok sasang-ui bulkyo-jeok kyekiko 율곡 사상의 불교적 계기고, in Hwang Ui-Dong 황의동 ed., *Hankuk-ui sasangka shipyin*, *Yulgok Yi Yi* 한국의 사상이 10 인, 율곡, (Seoul: Yemunseowon, 2002), pp. 455-457.

⁴¹¹ He was a disciple of Yulgok and styled Namkye 南溪 (1632-1695).

discord between the stepmother and Yulgok's elder brother.⁴¹² Hwang thinks that the discord can be a natural reason for Yulgok's stay in the mountains, suspecting that the records by Yulgok's disciples might have imposed philosophical reasons on Yulgok's stay in the mountain in order to prevent Yulgok and the Seoyin 西人 political faction⁴¹³ against being attacked by the Dongyin 東人 political faction.⁴¹⁴ However, Song Seok-Ku suspects the reliability of Bak Se-Che's record because Song does not believe the disharmony between Yulgok and his stepmother.⁴¹⁵

In sum, Song seems to lay more emphasis on Yulgok's philosophical motive than his family matters, whereas Hwang pays more attention to Yulgok's family disharmony than Yulgok's philosophical concern.

⁴¹² Hwang Joon-Yon 황준연, *Yulgok chelhak-ui yihae* 율곡 철학의 이해, (Seoul: Seokwangsa, 1995), pp. 46-49.

⁴¹³ This literally means the “westerners” in contrast with Dongyin 東人 (the “easterners”).

⁴¹⁴ Hwang, *ibid.* In his recent work, Hwang basically maintains the above position, but he seems to consider a possibility that Yulgok might keep his Confucian identity in mind. See *Yi Yulgok ke salm-ui moseup* 율곡 그 삶의 모습 (Yulgok: The Image of His Life), (Seoul: Seoul daehakgyo chulpanbu, 2000), pp. 39-45.

⁴¹⁵ Song, *ibid.*, p. 456.

Emperor Gao on the Three Teachings
(*Gao Huangdi Sanjiao lun* 高皇帝三教論)

Generally, discussions of the three teachings since the Han through the Song are, as everyone says, that Confucianism takes [the teaching of] Zhongni 仲尼 [i.e., Confucius], Buddhism considers Sakyamuni its founder, and Daoism regards LaoDan 老聃 [i.e., Laozi] its forefather.

夫三教之說, 自漢歷宋至今, 人皆稱之故, 儒以仲尼, 佛祖釋迦, 道宗老聃.

As for these three teachings (matters), [people's] misunderstanding of Laozi has been in existence many years. Who does not know that the Way of Laozi is not [mystical] practices [of Daoist priests] with yellow cap and the golden elixir (*jindan* 金丹)? The Way of Laozi is what those who possess the country and family should not abandon. For a long time from the past to the present, Laozi has been taken as [a philosophy of] "vacuity and non-being" (*xuwu* 虛無), which is indeed incorrect. The Way of Laozi closely relates to *Ren* 仁, or Humanity of the Ancient Three Emperors and Five Kings (*San Huang Wu Di* 三皇五帝), which was the emulation of [the Way of] Heaven. [Accordingly,] when the *San Huang Wu Di* moved, their movements were timely; when they took action, their actions were just. But the Way of Laozi does not aim at ascension and ataraxia, and, in fact, it is in line with Zhongni (Kongzi)'s tidying of [one's messy] mind (will). The words of Laozi are simple, but the meaning is profound. Nowadays people do not know the truth of the *Laozi*, and so they do not make use of it.

於斯三事, 悞陷老子已有季(年)矣. 孰不知老子之道, 非金丹黃冠之術, 乃有國有家者, 日用常行, 有不可闕者是也. 古今以老子為虛無, 實為謬哉. 其老子之道, 密三皇五帝之仁, 法天, 已動以時, 而舉合宜, 又非升霞禪定之機, 實與仲尼之志齊, 言簡而意深. 時人不識, 故弗用.

[Let us suppose that] before us there is a man who likes immortals and Buddha. Even if what he wants to call "the three teachings" are Confucianism of Zhongni, Buddhism of Sakyamuni, and the way of immortality [i.e., religious Daoism] of Master Red pine [a Daoist immortal] and the like, [not the teaching of Laozi], his naming [of the three teachings] could be taken as not so defective. Even the way to deal with a trivial affair (*lit.* a three-day trip) is profound and numinous, and expansive and firm [in terms of its efficacy], so that people cannot afford not to benefit [from it] in affairs. Thus, [needless to say] this Way of Heaven (*tiandao* 天道) is that which people [cannot but universally] practice in the world.

為前好仙佛者, 假之若果必欲稱三教者, 儒以仲尼, 佛以釋迦, 仙以赤松子輩, 則可以為教之名稱無瑕疵. 況於三日之道, 幽而靈, 張而固, 世人無不益其事, 而行於世者, 此天道也.

The mind of old and that of today are not the same [in some respects]. [Thus, today's people] are covetous of life and scared of death. Besides, they are not smart, thereby pursuing longevity and immortality. Some people who are loyal to kings practice

[activities for kings' longevity and immortality], and some [kings] who want to make their people prosperous admire and long for [longevity and immortality]. As widely noted, there are those kinds of stupid people, and thus Buddhism and immortality [religious Daoism] coax our country's people. [So, former emperors tried to] eradicate those by special royal edict, so that they cannot perpetuate. [To perpetuate themselves] these two teachings try more to meet people of small intelligence but great foolishness [to seduce and seek help from]. For example, in the past, Emperor Wu 武 of the Liang 梁 [502-549] liked Buddhism, and met mystical monks and people of valuable insight. However he could not attain Buddhist emancipation from anguish after all. Emperor Wu 武 of the Han 漢 [r. BC156-BC86], Emperors of the Wei, and Ming Huang of the Tang [i.e., Xuanzong 玄宗, r. 685-762] all liked the way of immortals, but they were satisfied with [living in] the world and did not ascend to Heaven. That they sought but did not demonstrate efficacy of the practices for immortality testifies to the fact that immortals and Buddha do not exist. Even stupid people came to disbelieve them. People who are avid for longevity long for such things as Zuo Ci's 左慈 sorcery and Luan Ba's 樂巴 wine [for longevity].

古今人志有不同，貪生怕死而非聰明，求長生不死者。故有為帝與之為民富者，尚之慕之。有等愚昧周知，所以將謂佛仙有所悟（吾）國扇民，特敕令以滅之，是以無常。此益二教，遇小聰明而大愚者。故如是昔梁武好佛，遇神僧寶公者，武帝終不遇佛證果。漢武魏帝唐明皇皆好神仙，足世而不霞舉，以斯之所求，以斯之所不驗，則仙佛無矣。致愚者不信，若左慈之幻操樂巴之撰酒起，貪生者慕。

In his admonition of the emperor, Han Yu was in a hurry to exterminate ghosts and spirits, letting only the emperor be the principle. Thus, ghosts and spirits understood that Han Yu was so, and so did Daoist practitioners away from home. This is the great mechanism of Heaven and Earth. If we discard [the belief in ghosts and spirits], then there will be no ghost and spirit in the world, and people will not be double-minded. Although the positions of the three teachings are different in regard to the way of improving our right conduct and attitude toward luxuriance and frugality, their principles for salvation are all one. [Hence, even] stupid people in the world should not miss any of the three teachings.

若韓退之匡君表以躁不以緩，絕鬼神無毫釐，惟王綱屬焉，則鬼神知韓愈如是，則又家出仙人。此天地之大機。若絕棄之而杳然，則世無鬼神，人無兩心。三教之立，雖持身榮儉之不同，濟給之理一。世之愚人，於斯三教有不可缺者。⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁶ "Gao huangdi sanjiao lun" 高皇帝三教論, *Sanjiao pin xu* 三教品, *Lishi congshu* 李氏叢書, juan 23 (Peking University archives), pp. 58a-59b.